

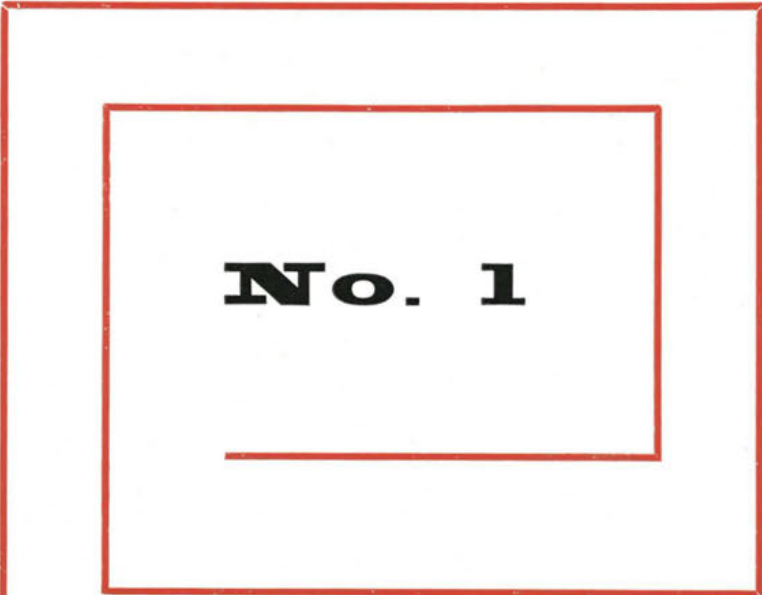
AUTUMN 1961

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SIGHT AND SOUND



THE FILM QUARTERLY



No. 1

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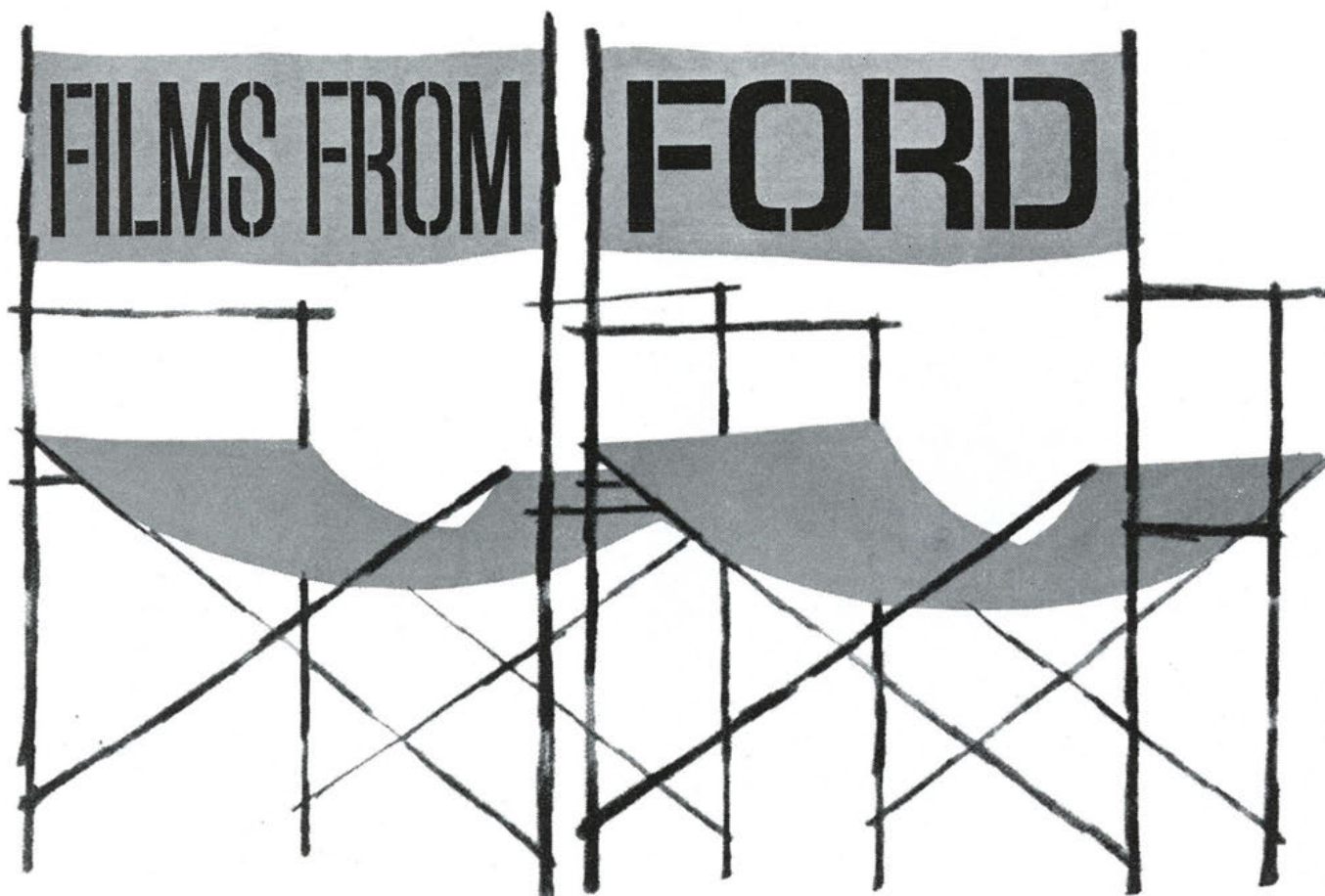
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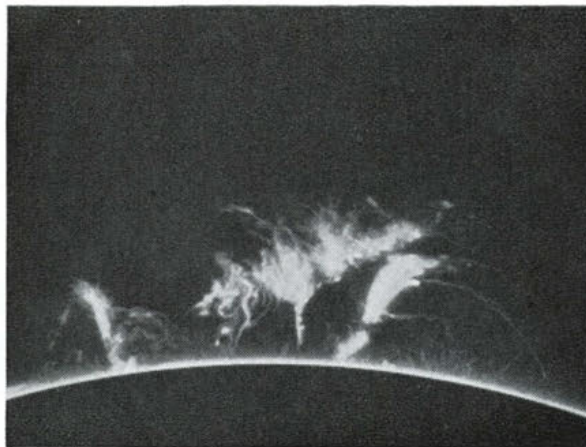
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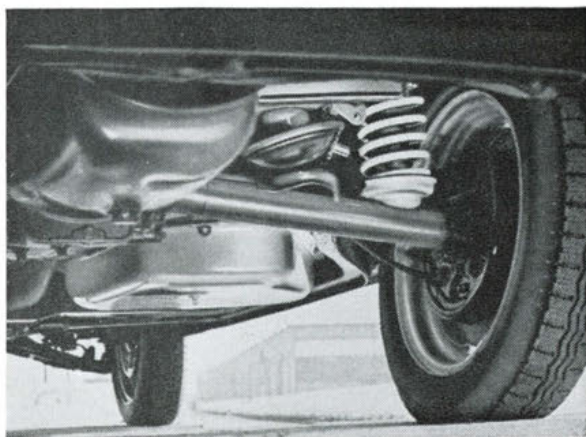
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SIGHT AND SOUND

THE INTERNATIONAL FILM QUARTERLY

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THE FRONT PAGE

THE ADVERTISEMENT which Warner Brothers ran a few weeks ago in *The Times* and elsewhere had a slight note of dignified bewilderment about it. They "acknowledged receipt of flowers from admirers of the late James Dean, but regretted to inform correspondents that portraits of Dean and *East of Eden* posters were not available for purchase." The reissue of *East of Eden* brought the crowds, the flowers (some, we were told, from as far afield as Yorkshire), the drawings of Dean handed in at the theatre with their forlorn messages ("James Dean lives forever").

Corrupted though it has been by imitation and excess, this legend, with all its sad lures towards identification, seems still as persistent as ever; and Warners seemed a bit uncertain as to whether these were old admirers, taking up where they left off, or, already, a new generation discovering a myth for themselves.

The *East of Eden* reissue was part of the current pattern of revivals, which has given the London cinema scene during the last few months a powerful air of *déjà vu*. *Gone With the Wind*, of course, reappeared in honour of the Civil War centenary; Fox brought back, simultaneously, *The Young Lions* and *The King and I*; Warners also revived, and scored a hit with, *Strangers on a Train*; *Duel in the Sun* returned. Looking through the London cinema programmes for an average week, one found four reissues, a couple of films which have been running so long that they begin almost to feel like reissues (*Ben-Hur* and *South Pacific*), two more long-runners in *Exodus* and *The Guns of Navarone*, eleven cinemas showing foreign language pictures, one nudist film, and only seven cinemas showing brand-new British and American films.

The pattern that has been forming in the last few years, in fact, is now hardening. The blockbusters dig themselves in; a press conference is called to announce the takings of *The Guns of Navarone* (half a million pounds here, a million in nine weeks in America); Mr. Hargreaves, in the trade press, announces that at one provincial cinema the film has run longer than anything except *South Pacific*; and Mr. Eckman, backing *South Pacific*, takes the opportunity suavely to point out that it ran 81 weeks to *Navarone's* fifteen. No one now doubts that every year will see four or five films (and some, like *La Dolce Vita*, may be continental) which will break all the box-office records set by all the previous long-runners.

Simultaneously, the foreign language cinemas are

doing a boom trade, which again was foreseen. One notes, perhaps optimistically, that continental distributors seem to be importing rather less sensational junk and rather more quality pictures. Or perhaps it is just that, from a box-office point of view, the quality films look as sensational as the trash. Of the continental pictures shown in the week under consideration, only two lacked "X" certificates and they were double-billed with "X" features.

But there is a shortage of programme pictures, average entertainment. Reissues are brought in to fill the gap, some of the major companies seeming quite content to let new productions queue up for a screening while they test out the appeal of a revival. Perhaps it's significant that of the seven new films shown during this week, three were so avowedly "family" pictures that they went out of their way to make this apparent in the titles—*The Parent Trap*, *The Trapp Family*, *No, My Darling Daughter*—while one (*Goodbye Again*) dusted down the old woman's picture formula even if its excuse was a Sagan novel.

With Disney rediscovering the appeal of innocence in the form of Hayley Mills, with Universal-International bringing back Tammy, their river-boat Pollyanna, and Fox aiming several productions at the child market, it may well be that the wheel has spun round again, that anguish is going out and sweetness coming in. From James Dean, in fact, to Hayley Mills. But if this is what Hollywood is trying to impose on us, there is still the impression that the big companies no longer really trust their own judgment. The long-runners have, on the whole, their own built-in box-office factors: a subject that can be called "epic" on the posters, an extravagant roster of stars, an assurance that if the production really cost what we are told it did, something of this must be visible on the screen.

In the middle range, however, nothing seems certain. Josh Billings, the prophet of the *Kine Weekly*, reports success for *The Last Sunset* and only qualified success for *The Misfits*; success for *One Hundred and One Dalmatians* and failure for *Greyfriars Bobby*; success for *No, My Darling Daughter* and failure for *Flame in the Streets*. At a suburban cinema a few months ago, there were long queues for a Western while next door an Elvis Presley picture seemed to be drawing no audience. The public, if uncertain about what they want, are indicating more clearly what they don't want; and if this is not precisely discrimination, it is still something that the big companies must be reckoning with. Reissues can stop a gap; but they don't solve the problem of the missing entertainment picture.

Opposite: Peter Ustinov, director and leading player, on the set of "Billy Budd". Photograph by Thomas Picton.

CINEMA of appearance

by GABRIEL PEARSON and ERIC RHODE

Jean Seberg and Daniel Boulanger in "Breathless".



Without doubt, the best films of the New Wave have been associated with a radical change in film-making. Though their innovations are often startling, we should not be blinded by this from seeing them as part of a more general revolution in which our idea of art, or consciousness itself, may have been subtly transformed.

part one: THE HUMANIST'S APPROACH

AS HUMANISTS, OUR FIRST REACTION TO THE MOST EXTREME examples of this revolution—Godard's *Breathless* and Truffaut's *Shoot the Pianist*—is as much one of bewilderment as of pleasure; for these films, according to our theories, shouldn't work. They break most of the rules of construction; sequences are barely connected; moods veer violently and without explanation. Like a cat teasing a ball of wool, the thread of a tale may be arbitrarily picked up, played with, and just as suddenly dropped. As for morality (if there is a morality), we are given few indications of how we should understand its alien logic: characters apparently behave without motive, their feelings remain unpredictable. Moreover, we feel that this is a contingent art, created on every level by improvisation—a procedure which affronts our belief in the artifact as a contrived and calculated work. It is as though, having landed on the moon, we were confronted by a lunar art.

For our intensity of response confirms these films as works of art. And here we notice the first of two contradictions. Although apparently outraging every principle of organisation, they are not chaotic. On the contrary, they cohere beautifully. And second, though their very being is improvised, they move with a deftness and aplomb that is almost scornful.

The aim of this investigation is to explore these contradictions and try to resolve them, if only partially. This undertaking would be pedantic if it were restricted to *Breathless* and *Shoot the Pianist*, both of them relatively slight films. What interests us is that these two contradictions, expressed here in their most extreme form, are found to varying degrees in the most recent films of Antonioni, Resnais, Bresson and Wajda; in such plays as *The Connection* and *Waiting for Godot*; and, moving out into another field, in certain types of non-figurative painting. To investigate the New Wave, therefore, may throw back an unusual light on what at first seem a number of widely disparate works of art.

* * *

The critic must have some basis of understanding with a film before he can analyse it. Otherwise his comments, however intelligent, will be continually off the mark. As in politics, there must be a common language before negotiations can take place.

JACQUES SICLIER'S ARTICLE ON NEW WAVE AND FRENCH CINEMA in the Summer number of *SIGHT AND SOUND* is a case in point. We have here an intelligent humanist who is unable to come

to terms with the new movement. Lacking the vocabulary by which he can both define his response to these films and at the same time make evaluations from a humanist standpoint, his argument, though for the most part logical, remains at one remove from the subject. We see this most obviously in his conclusion: "Progressively this young cinema is losing itself behind a curtain of smoke and dreams; and this cinema, which has been described as representative of its time, is in reality as remote from the actual as anything one can imagine."

In using such phrases as "losing itself behind a curtain of smoke and dreams" and "remote from the actual", Siclier is taking certain assumptions for granted. But this makes his position extremely vulnerable, since it is on just these points that apologists for the New Wave would challenge him. Their argument would be that the humanist approach, though admirably decent, provides us with an unsatisfactory approach to criticism since it presupposes a stable reality (implied in such terms as "actual") which we can no longer believe in. For many reasons, they would continue, reality has become as arbitrary as smoke and dreams. There is no curtain, and there is no "actual" as Siclier would have it.

Faced by this challenge, the humanist critic may at first feel—as perhaps Siclier doesn't—that his position is so inadequate that he must abandon it. If he is more tenacious, however, he may hope to discover a vocabulary to resolve the deadlock between himself and the New Wave without a forced surrender of his position. Before he can achieve this, and in order to discover such a basis of understanding, he would first have to analyse his own assumptions. For the sake of clarity, we are summarising these in note form.

Assumptions of the Humanist Critic

1. GREAT ART IS CREATED OUT OF certain conditions, and these conditions are limited. They are:—

(a) That in this art both the inner world of the individual and the outer world in all its totality are stable and continuous; that their relationship is dynamic; and that man is equipped, by his reason and imagination, to understand both this world and himself.

(b) That this inner and outer world remain, despite disruptions, in harmony with each other.

(c) That, most important of all, the greatness of this art depends on the extent to which it illuminates the central human predicaments. This concept of centrality is a difficult one to define; for centrality in art, the critic usually points to such literary models as *The Odyssey* or *Anna Karenina*, or to such films as *The Childhood of Maxim Gorki* and *The World of Apu*.

(d) Finally, that this art matches up, however inadequately, to our sense of continuity in the real world. It achieves this by aspiring towards both maximum inclusiveness and maximum coherence. This is brought about by making connections. (See E. M. Forster's "Only connect".)

2. This stable yet dynamic relationship between inner and outer world can best be conceived of in dramatic terms (i.e., dialectically). Because of this a certain type of plot is most useful, a type of plot which develops from:

(a) *Antagonisms*: the most valuable of these play the stable world against some disruptive force—i.e. order against chaos, moderation against excess.

Ulysses':

"Untune that string,
And, hark, what discord follows!"

describes the most serious development of that conflict.

Fortunately, such discord is usually followed by:

(b) A *dénouement* and *resolution*, in which the world returns to its natural harmony.

3. Having consented to this model of reality, we are then forced to accept further steps in the argument.

(a) The artist holds this balance between inner and outer world at his peril, for if he cannot sustain it in his work his vision of reality is impelled to become *either* a riotous, all-embracing fantasy in which his mind is the controlling authority *or* a "scientific" construction of mechanistic laws in which men are seen as no more than biological automata. (cf. Naturalism).

(b) Though these two deviations move in opposing directions, they do, when taken to an extreme, merge into each other and unify; for any aspect of reality becomes indistinguishably grotesque and arbitrary when taken out of total context.¹

The misunderstanding between humanist critic and New Wave apologist begins to make itself clear. It arises, as misunderstandings often do, over a confusion of categories. The deadlock in fact is less over an aesthetic than over the theory of reality on which it depends.

In realising this, the humanist critic finds himself in an impossible position. If he is honest he will accept his

opponent's point: that at our present state of knowledge we can no longer believe in a stable reality, since such a belief supposes a hierarchy of values based on a public morality—and none such now holds. This concession breaks the back of his argument. Without a centrality there can be no arbitrary and grotesque. Therefore the humanist has no reason to describe the New Wave films as failures: he must indeed accept them on their own terms.

* * *

This is the situation—stated too drastically, perhaps. Most humanist critics would probably go as far as admitting that they desired, rather than believed in, a stable reality, and that they willingly suspended disbelief as they went about their work. Unfortunately this scepticism does not extend to their critical language. If it did, we would be spared such presumptuous judgments as the SIGHT AND SOUND reviewer's faulting of *Pickpocket* because it didn't make "the necessary connections", or the BBC critic's rejection of *Breathless* ("The best one can say of it is that it stinks") because its plot lacked conflict. Such comments reveal a failure to recognise how far these films have broken from their humanist prototypes in the nineteenth century novel and play.

It is over this "how far" that confusion has arisen. If the break had been complete from the start, the inadequacy of the humanist's vocabulary would have been obvious. The shift to a completely new kind of film has however been a gradual one; and the directors themselves seem to have been barely conscious of it. It is only now, with our complacency disturbed by the New Wave, that we can look back and see the process by which the meaning of such concepts as plot and action has been developed. One can usefully trace such a development from *Bicycle Thieves*, through *L'Avventura* to *Breathless*.

Bicycle Thieves is apparently conceived in terms of the nineteenth century theatre. The plot exposes a typical conflict: a lone man pitted against the injustices of society. As in a Feydeau farce, De Sica uses objects to further the intrigue—the stolen bicycle is no more than an honourable equivalent of the stolen letter or double bed. Yet by the standards of the well-made play this plot is weak; for the intrigue is undermined by a current of aimless and seemingly irrelevant lyricism. The social conflict in fact is not the plot: it is no more than a theme. The true plot, miming the wayward drift of father and son lost in a labyrinth of streets and piazzas, is the futile search for the illusive thief. This search poses strange, unanswered questions. "What do we mean by a thief, and how can we apply moral categories when we know the situation which makes him as he is?" There is an equally strange transference of guilt, by which the father-as-detective becomes the father-as-criminal. Such preoccupations, though never acknowledged fully, disrupt the plot's manifest action.

Yet it is still rewarding to approach *Bicycle Thieves* in terms of the humanist's idea of plot. This is not so with *L'Avventura*, in which such a plot is both a lure and an irrelevance. Critics have understandably been disturbed by the unexplained disappearance of Anna. As a device this can be justified: it enacts Antonioni's sense of the arbitrariness of experience—the unpredictable workings of memory and feeling. Yet in the last resort the device leaves us uneasy, since the conventions of the film do not prepare us for it. Although Antonioni has moved a long way from De Sica in his discovery of new techniques,



"Shoot the Pianist": Charles Aznavour.

he has not come to terms with their similar problem. His plot, too, does not conduct the film's true meaning.

Claudia, the critical and moral intelligence of the film, involves herself with a corrupt society and helps to define it, in much the same way that James's bright young things from America define the corruption of Europe. Yet Claudia, for many reasons, lacks their moral stability; hence the idea of corruption, as exemplified by Sandro and his circle, needs drastic qualification. The conflict is so blurred that moral judgment at first sight becomes impossible. To make sense of *L'Avventura*, in fact, one must initially discard this concept of corruption, with all its satisfying imprecision, in favour of the more neutral concept of failure. For it is surely part of Antonioni's intention, by doing as much justice as he can to the complexities of human relationships, to neutralise such self-approving moral categories.

But first, if only as a form of puzzle about technique, *L'Avventura* helps us to start asking the right questions. What are we to make of Antonioni's camerawork? Those beautiful dolly and tracking shots cannot be understood in terms of the narrative devices of the nineteenth century novel, upon which so much previous camerawork has implicitly relied. Antonioni's tracking shots do not fulfil any obvious narrative requirement. Yet our aesthetic sense warns us that this ballet of movement is as much part of the film's meaning as the device of Anna's enigmatic disappearance. The difficulty here lies in relating our sense of the "rightness" of these techniques to our general moral sense of what the film is about.

In *Breathless* this difficulty is at its most extreme, and for this very reason it should begin to point the way to a solution. Here there is no gradual shift of conventions to help us to readjust. We are launched immediately into anarchy. We have no apparent choice between blind acceptance and blind rejection. We cannot, as we could with *L'Avventura* and *Bicycle Thieves*, simply go on trying to read the film in our own terms. Here connections are difficult, almost impossible to discover: the camerawork, the editing and the behaviour of the characters appear alike random and unmotivated.

Yet the tensions between apparent plot and what actually happens on the screen are not so different from those of its two predecessors. The plot could best be described like this: Patricia is a Jamesian Daisy Miller involved with what one might quaintly call a corrupt young European, Michel. Here, however, the notion of corruption is not even questioned: it is rendered absurd and irrelevant. Michel's banditry and search for a mysterious colleague who owes him money by no means defines what Michel is. On the contrary, the whole notion of corruption is burlesqued, until it ceases to be in any way what the film is about. Hence the apparent plot, of which we could give a clear account in the conventional terms of the hounded thief, is utterly extraneous to the film's action. It becomes indeed what Godard would call *un gag*.

With so little connection between action and plot, all other connections begin to fail us. The usual let-out is symbolism; but here there is nothing like such a meaning. Indeed, as soon as we seize on some aspect of the film as containing symbolic significance, we are immediately contradicted by the action. To be symbolically satisfying, Antonio (the man with the money for whom Michel is searching) ought never to turn up. Yet, aping the conventions of the B-thriller, up he duly pops with the money in the last reel, although he is too late. This too late evokes no irony, however. That sort of moral is not the subject of the film.

And so our confusion increases. Significance is like a chair continually being pulled from under us. We fall with an absurd



Monica Vitti and Gabriele Ferzetti, Claudia and Sandro, in one of the island scenes of "*L'Avventura*".

bump, victims of *le gag*. The more we probe these films, the more enigmatic they appear. The more we try to penetrate their depths, the more we find ourselves involved in a series of shifting, ambiguous surfaces. We are like Alice, trying to walk away from the Wonderland cottage.

part two: THE ARTIST'S APPROACH

The principal reason why the humanist critic has failed to realise the inadequacy of his vocabulary is that the artist himself has been barely conscious of a change in outlook. While ostensibly holding on to the humanist's belief in a stable reality, he has in fact been groping towards an expression which requires a quite different metaphysic.

PIRANDELLO'S PLAYS GIVE US A LEAD. WE HAVE HERE A WRITER whose artistic insights are ahead of a metaphysic to clarify them. Hence our impression of hesitancy in a playwright who employs many of the modern devices of improvisation. He is hesitant because, despite the utmost scepticism about the notion of centrality, he remains a humanist. Centrality, however illusory, exists for him, though he doubts our ability to recognise it. In his *Henry IV* he is still asking whether the madman is sane or the sane man mad, whether the twelfth century is eternally present or irredeemably past. The most challenging question for a humanist—as to whether a central reality exists or not, or whether there is only illusion and therefore an art which can only be illusion imitating illusion—remains unasked.

Six Characters in Search of an Author takes us a stage further. One notices here the title's pun: "author" is both desired author in the ordinary sense and "auctoritas"—a

coherent metaphysic which can establish hierarchies among the characters' modes of being and so evaluate and dignify their actions. Their terrible predicament, their anguished states of mind, are both heightened and nullified by the ironic framework within which Pirandello sets them. They are no longer figures of tragedy but specimens with tragic potentialities. In as much as the theatre has been turned into a laboratory, so they too have been turned into automata, puppets struggling desperately to be human. They protest—too much perhaps. But in this clinic of humanity their anguished clichés are seen to lack meaningful content; only in their enigmatic but terrible cry, in their very desire to become human, do they transcend this sorry state.

All we are left with is a cry, and the debris of a play. Pirandello's achievement is strangely moving; yet we may well ask why such a paraphernalia of construction yielded results so meagre and limited. The humanist critic, we remember, fails to account for the new aesthetic because he is blinkered by a theory of reality which cannot make sense of it. In Pirandello's case, the failure works in reverse.

The humanist assumes that (to use Sartre's image) experience is an onion from which one peels off layers and layers of illusion to expose a small white nub of reality at the centre. But if we shift to an existentialist view, we conceive of experience as an unending series of appearances, each of which is equally "real". Pirandello fails, then, because his idealist humanism, from which he ultimately derives his sense of form, cannot contain his existentialist insights.² We are left in the end with an impression not of controlled irony, but of bewilderment and contradiction.

The best films of the New Wave leave no such impression. Their existentialism may be partial and muddled but it does support their aesthetic. And since it is this philosophy that their language of smoke and dreams enacts, we need to know its main assumptions. Again, we are summarising these in note form.

Assumptions of the New Wave

1. A WORLD IN WHICH all appearances are equally valid is a world of discontinuity. The self is a series of events without apparent connection: its past and future are a series of actions, but its present is a void waiting to be defined by action. The self therefore is no longer seen as stable. It is without an inner core—without essence.
2. Other people are likewise without essence: since they too are an infinite series of appearances, they remain unpredictable. Only objects—i.e. "things" with an essence—can be understood. People remain mysteries.
3. Since there is no longer a stable reality, traditional moralities prove untrustworthy. They seek to essentialise appearances, order them so that they can be predicted, and so conceal from men their true condition in a discontinuous world—utter isolation. Each is responsible for improvising his moral imperatives; to accept any one role (i.e. to fix one's identity as "bandit" "pianist" or "intellectual") is an evasion of responsibility and becomes "bad faith". Such "bad faith" dehumanises and turns man into an object. Existentially, he dies.
4. Conversely, to avoid bad faith morality must be an endless, anguished process of improvisation. One no longer acts to fulfil ideals like goodness and decency, but to initiate one's own self-discovery, the only moral "goal" left. Hence action is necessarily opportunistic.
5. In consequence, each act is unique and without social precedence, and so to others will appear motiveless since there is no stable self on which to pin a motive. From this arises the seemingly absurd notion of a motiveless act (*l'acte gratuit*).
6. Our continuous re-creation in every act is the condition of our freedom. But such a continuous freedom demands total responsibility for all that we are, have been, and are to be. It is only theoretically possible to live up to such a rigorous ideal, so that we seek to flee from it into the passivity of being

an object. To the man-as-object the world ceases to be an infinite series of appearances and becomes an infinite series of accidents.

* * *

The self is a void. Its past and future are a series of events waiting to be filled in. To take on an identity is an act of bad faith: we become objects to be used by others, we die existentially. The hero of *Shoot the Pianist* moves uneasily between such self-destructive roles. He can become Charlie, the timid lover; Edouard Saroyan, the concert pianist; or a wild beast like his brothers. Though he knows that each of these choices is false, he is unable to discover the authentic. In *Breathless* Michel has similarly disastrous alternatives: finding himself cast as bandit, callow lover, or son of an eminent clarinetist, he immediately tries to break out into freedom. Identity is a trap; and since sex is identity, he and Patricia try to save themselves by remaining androgynous. In the void of the self, these identities are deceptions; and they can teach us nothing. They are appearances, as "real" only as the actor's role. To ask if Michel's father was indeed a great clarinetist is as naive and irrelevant as to ask the actor if he was "really" King Lear.

To believe we can learn from the past is also bad faith. Memories are as ambiguous and deceptive as identity. So Sandro cannot learn from his previous *l'avventure*, nor can Charlie make sense of the murder in the snow. Was it a nightmare or did it take place? Such questions are meaningless. If, for the benefit of the doubt, he were to mourn the girl's death—and who knows if she, like Sandro's Anna, ever existed?—he would again be deceiving himself; for to become a mourner is again to take on an identity.

A world of appearances confronts us not with expressive faces and meaningful objects, but with enigmas and indecipherable images.³ In *Breathless*, Patricia seems to conceal her feelings behind her dark glasses, but when she removes them her face is still an enigma. And it is still the same enigmatic face she turns to us at the end of the film—the face of a beautiful sphinx. To all our questions she returns the same answer: her own cool features into which we can read all meaning or no meaning. The face of Charlie at the end of *Shoot the Pianist* is her male equivalent.

Of all enigmas the most inscrutable is suicide. Because of this inscrutability, and because it is the one act we have no adequate response to, suicide has haunted writers like Fitzgerald and Pavese, film directors like Antonioni and Truffaut. If we mourn a suicide we take on a role, so deceiving ourselves. All we can do is either hastily forget, or answer it with our own enigma. As the hero of *Il Grido* hurls himself down from the tower of a sugar refinery, his wife screams. As with Pirandello's characters, this cry is a last chance to assert her humanity against an inscrutable mystery. She tries to call his bluff by matching enigma against enigma.

In a world of appearances, responsibility lies in discovering one's own morality. Our intention is opportunistic. Since other people are unpredictable, our only chance of survival is to trap them into taking roles. Naturally they will behave in the same way to us. In such a game we can only hope to win by improvising the rules. Our principal trick will be *le gag*, the unpredictable quip or act which turns the tables. So Michel robs people, plays jokes on them, and knocks them down. In each case the result is the same: he turns them into objects. "Have you anything against youth?" says a girl and flourishes a copy of *Cahiers*. "Yes," he counters, "I like the old . . ." Distinctions between generations, class, or creed must be minimised: they are traps to be evaded by improvisation.

With Patricia this shadow-boxing takes on a disinterested intensity. "A girl's a coward who doesn't light her cigarette the first time," he improvises, and waits for her next move. She bluffs him magnificently by *un acte gratuit*; that is, by an act which is an enigma to him, but which is in terms of her own morality quite understandable. "I stayed with you to see if I were in love. Now I know I am not, and I am no longer



"Shoot the Pianist": Saroyan, the concert artist, has become Charlie, the café piano player.

interested in you." For the sake of her own freedom he must no longer exist; and it is therefore logical that she should betray him to the police and so indirectly bring about his death. As she says, "Elephants vanish when they are unhappy." Too bad that he should hold the last trump in the pack—death, and an inscrutable remark, "*Tu es dégueulasse.*"

A morality which requires us to be continually free and responsible at the same time is impossible; so we retreat into a passivity one of whose forms is stoicism. The world in this position becomes a series of accidents, and we can do nothing about controlling it. Charlie is resigned to bearing his brothers' guilt; because of their crimes he too has become a criminal. Though this transference of guilt is mysterious, he makes no attempt to understand it. He is as stoical about it as he is about the inconsequentiality of life. Somehow for him action and intention never connect. In trying to be kind to the café *patron*, he murders him; respecting women, he kills the two he loves the most. In both this film and in *Breathless* there are long sequences shot from within a car. A jumble of lights and scenery whirls past. The characters look out, but they are cut off from this world, this senseless inanimate place. What can they do about it? Nothing. They shrug their shoulders and drive on.

* * *

This morality of course applies to more than the story on the screen. It conditions, too, the director's own relationship to his material. He no longer uses the film as a means of unveiling the reality behind illusion. Such penetration is out of

place in a world of appearances, in which the cinematic shadows are as "real" as the world outside. If there is no "reality" art cannot be an illusion. Further, the director rejects the rules of film-making as bad faith. Both morality and aesthetic must be discovered through improvisation and our interest will lie in this process of discovery. Each director must create his own language of appearances, although his language is not one of shadows and dreams as Siclier would claim: shadows imply a reflecting object, dreams a waking reality; and these are assumptions rejected by the existentialist. The humanist critic should not be surprised if this improvisation fails to create a plot, for the plot is not now found within the film but in the director's relationship to his material. This is where the conflict and drama lie.

Such an aesthetic is neither new, nor developed to its full extent in the films of Truffaut and Godard. Harold Rosenberg in the *London Magazine* (July, 1961) has described how such a theory finds its most extreme form in action painting. The action painter, he writes, does not work from a predetermined idea, but approaches his canvas as he would a person. He sets up a dialogue with his medium, and through improvisation tries to make discoveries about his own mind. "To work from sketches arouses the suspicion that the artist still regards the canvas as a place where the mind records its contents—rather, it is itself the 'mind' through which the painter thinks by changing the surface through paint."

This is not to be seen as a form of self-expression: "which assumes the acceptance of the ego as it is. It has to do with self-creation, self-definition, or self-transcendence." This art



"Michel imitates the tough man ethos..." Jean-Paul Belmondo in "Breathless".

is not "personal", though its subject matter is the artist's individual possibilities. Painting here significantly approaches pantomime and dance.⁴

In the light of this we must be cautious of the way in which we consider the "content" of *Breathless* and *Shoot the Pianist*. We cannot censure them for the banality of their material or the self-regarding nature of their humour. Gags, snippets from the B-feature thriller, Cocteauesque surrealism, and so on, are used not for their intrinsic merit but as a kind of vocabulary. It is only if they fail to find a diction or a style that one can fault their use. We can talk here of burlesque and quotation but not of parody, for parody implies a "real thing" on which to depend.

Since we are not interested in content but in the mind handling it, the disruptions and disconnections of narrative no longer disturb us; for these features do not signal a failure on the director's part but, on the contrary, a success. Failure would lie in his forgetting this self-exploration and becoming involved in the bad faith of telling a tale. He achieves his success by freeing himself from this temptation, imposing his own mental gestures on us. This can best be contrived through camerawork and cutting. In *Shoot the Pianist*, for instance, there is a sequence of a girl walking up and down a corridor which is not edited for the sake of narrative economy, but for that of the maximum visual brilliance. Not enough that this scene, by the canons of traditional film-making, should be excessively obtrusive; but Truffaut must underline his pyrotechnics by developing them against a background of virtuoso violin playing. Cutting, too, is used to set up enigmas of troubling beauty. There is one device in particular which is favoured by these directors. In *L'Avventura* we see it in embryonic form. It begins in the island hut with a close-up of Claudia's face which fades into a shot of the turbulent sea. Before we can shriek pathetic fallacy, however, the camera pans and we see Claudia in long shot looking down at the waves. Since Antonioni makes no clear point with this device, it remains a trick. Godard, however, uses it continually and to a purpose. Michel raises his revolver to the sun. We cut to a shot of the sun, synchronised (apparently) with the sound of a pistol shot. Then Michel's voice is overlaid: "Women," he says, "never drive carefully." The gun shot has become the crash of car bumpers. At another moment Michel, looking ashamed, is seen in the back of a car. Just when we become certain that he has been arrested, he steps out of the car and pays the driver; and we

have to reinterpret his expression. In a world of appearances, Godard seems to be saying, we must always be on our guard; for not only are our assumptions a form of bad faith—they also deceive us.

The director is no longer an interpreter: he is indeed a director, a dictator. Though we may be privileged to enter his mind, we must pay a price in obeying its seemingly arbitrary movements. It is as if we too were inside the fast moving car; for we too have to accept the phantasmagoria outside as the total world. We are all—characters, audience and film—at the director's mercy. His disturbing treatment of his characters is typical. When Michel turns to us and we see how his dark glasses are without one lens, we laugh uneasily. We are laughing not only at his expense but at the expense of our previous assumptions.

We are not involved in the story, then, but with the director. Each time we try to identify ourselves with the narrative he will deliberately attempt to alienate us. Naturalistic effects therefore must be limited: the love scene is disinfected of possible associations, blood is conspicuously absent from Michel's death. The messiness of the world, all its pathetic and irrelevant demands on our attention, have to be tidied away. If they weren't, our attention might all too easily deviate from the play of the controlling mind.

* * *

Our two contradictions are now resolved. Since films like *Breathless* and *Shoot the Pianist* enact a philosophy of discontinuity, they can be disconnected on almost every level and yet cohere beautifully. Further, their improvisations do not appear hesitant, since the director, in making his self-discoveries, uses them purposively. If it is bad faith to believe that reality is predictable, improvisation will be the best way to show us how it is in fact a series of appearances in the process of Becoming. At the same time, improvisation rather dishonestly satisfies our naturalistic habits ("It's so like life!") and so dupes us. Too dazzled to notice the aggressive originality of these films, we watch them without our usual defensiveness towards experiment.

part three: THE HUMANIST POSITION RECONSIDERED

Despite its many insights, the Cinema of Appearance is inadequate, for reality is much richer than it makes out. To define its limitations we need a humanism reinterpreted by psychoanalysis; in the light of which the existentialist outlook is shown as psychotic and centrality, or the total rich vision, becomes closely linked with an idea of the "integrated self".

WE HAVE ATTEMPTED SO FAR TO DESCRIBE THE NEW CINEMA without discussing its own standards of evaluation. How in fact would one of its defenders judge the worth of its films, know whether a film was good or bad? Their criteria are threefold: firstly, they would be concerned with the quality of the director's imagination; secondly, with his ability to avoid the bad faith of previous conventions, like narrative or plot; and thirdly, with his talent in creating a coherent style.

By these criteria, *Breathless* emerges as a better film than *Shoot the Pianist*, for Godard avoids bad faith and creates a self-contained style whilst Truffaut creates a poignant, uncertain style and hints at a lost centrality. By evoking an atmosphere similar to the *apache* world of *Casque d'Or*, Truffaut makes plain his nostalgia for the lost luminous place

where all men are brothers, where love is given and received with unselfconscious gratitude. In his film the most haunting image is of people putting arms around each other, helping each other to bear a mutual pain. Behind these images lies a theme of man's desire for centrality, a theme which is established from the first moments of the film as Chico, the amiable gangster, listens to a stranger talking about marriage, and developed through Charlie, his brother, into a formidable criticism of the Cinema of Appearance.

As a great pianist, Charlie is unhappy not because his role is a form of bad faith, but because he knows it hinders him from being a complete man, from giving himself to others both through his talents and, especially, through his love for them. This failure is disastrous. His wife commits suicide when he is unable to give her the help she needs. As an act of reparation he retreats to a café, apparent centre of brotherhood, where his failure to be a total person leads to the murder of the *patron* and the death of a second girl he would like to love. Since he cannot be himself, he remains an enigma to others: people therefore try to create roles for him. The girl sees him as a means of escape from the sordid city; the *patron* as a catalyst for lustful fantasies in which all women become prostitutes. Charlie's self-mistrust becomes a denial of responsibility, so that instead of actions he breeds accidents. It is not without significance that he accidentally kills the *patron* at the moment when he embraces him; for to claim brotherhood without responsibility can only lead to death.

In taking refuge from himself in timidity, Charlie condemns himself to failure. Why then has he been forced into such an unhappy position? The two kidnappers supply an answer. "Always prepare for the murderer at your door," they say, "and if it turns out to be only a burglar, you're lucky." In making such a remark, these two clowns cease to be an arbitrary gag and—unlike the shadowy detectives of *Breathless* with whom Michel and Godard merely play—take on a sharp symbolic force. They begin to stand for all that is sordid, stupid and malignant in society, all that drives Charlie into flight from society and himself. If we accept this motivation, we see that Truffaut's film no longer embodies a philosophy of discontinuity, but has become a film about a man who suffers discontinuity and loss.

By existentialist canons, then, and unlike *Breathless*, this film breaks all the rules and fails. At the same time it approaches more closely than *Breathless* to our own sense of reality's richness. Since in the last resort we must base our judgments on this response, we are forced to question the all-embracing claims of this New Cinema.

* * *

The Cinema of Appearance, we see, is a retreat from a total vision of reality. Though this retreat is honest (it takes courage to realise how lonely man is in a disconnected world where traditional consolations are useless), it is unable to articulate our sense of life's richness. Yet to argue failure in such terms is to leave oneself vulnerable to the charge of whimsical subjectivism. We need a public criterion. One of these is indicated by psycho-analysis, though this does not exclude others.

The terms we would use are those of Melanie Klein. According to her, the individual under stress moves either towards integration or disintegration—and this of course conditions his perception of the world. To achieve integration, he must work through the depressive (or mourning) phase in which he acknowledges, however unknowingly, the fact that he has destroyed his inner world by envy. By confronting this desolation, he begins to re-create the value and coherence of his inner world, and this in turn begins to give meaning to the outer world. If this desolation is too hard to bear, however,

he will defend himself by "splitting" himself, and thus cutting off the consciousness of depression. If he does this frequently he gradually becomes schizophrenic. The inner and outer world cease to relate and each in turn splits more and more.

By this view, *Breathless* exhibits all the symptoms of such a manic defence. It is no more than a splintered fragment of a splintered reality. Its hard, glossy clarity can be seen as an attempt to foil the onrush of reality with all its messy completeness. It constructs a relationship whose sole justification is to deny love, with its mutual knowledge and commitment, and substitutes instead a form of manic defence—narcissism—so that Michel and Patricia see each other as mirrors and not as people. It works towards no release, because it creates no solid, intractable stuff through which to work. The disturbing tensions between youth and age, class and creed, are deliberately excluded. Bodies never sweat. Objects hit, neither crunch nor thump. Hence death is denied its sole human significance—loss. For as there is nothing to lose, there is nothing to gain; as there is nothing to destroy, there is nothing to create. This is the anti-art of an anti-world; and all we are left to marvel at is the pyrotechnic flight of intellect through void.

Or so the director would have us believe. Yet even the most extreme manic defence is not impregnable. In *Shoot the Pianist* there is, obviously, a fumbling attempt to re-create a world where love and the desolation of reality are not feared. In *Breathless* the break in the defence is not so immediately apparent. It only begins to reveal itself when we look closely at its morality, which is a form of stoicism.⁵

Since traditional moralities have lost their sanctions, our only alternatives are either collapse or a manifestation of dignity simply at the process of being. This stoicism finds for itself a weird code of honour which runs counter to the improvised rules of the game. Michel, having murdered, must court death and endure without comment the neon headlines announcing his coming capture. Patricia, having betrayed, must go on betraying. As Michel says, "Murderers murder, informers inform, and lovers love." Michel imitates the tough man ethos—his idol is Humphrey Bogart—and mimes his set of aggressive gestures: which is ridiculous since a shadow world presents no objects. There is no point in being tough if there is nothing to be tough about. If this stoicism is inconsistent with the theory of the world as appearance, why then does Michel subscribe to it?

In Kleinian terms one would say it was a defence against the



"Ashes and Diamonds": "... plot barely contains certain lyrical sequences such as the polonaise at dawn".

tragic sense of life; of the fulness which love and gratitude can bring, and with it—since we cannot have one without the other—the desolation of death and destruction. One can only partially realise this knowledge, for a complete realisation would require more than human courage. To some degree we all have our defences; and all our defences in the light of this reality are absurd.

Michel's stoicism, however, is a defence not only against this awareness of tragedy but against the terrifying demands made by an existentialist morality; for this philosophy of appearance is in itself deeply psychotic. Instead of mourning it offers anguish, instead of the integrated self it offers flight from identity, and instead of reality it offers us a reality like a shattered mirror.

Yet Michel and Patricia cannot gag the tragic sense. It is there in the pregnancy they try to ignore, and it is there in Michel's desire to go to Rome, that old centre where all roads used to lead. It is even there in his jealousy, which contradicts his "cool" creed of stoic indifference. A sense of loss does issue from this film as a note of wistfulness—the wilfulness of world-baffled children. And once we have caught this note, we begin to make sense of the film in humanist terms. However tentatively, the film begins to transform itself and take on the shape of drama. It begins to manifest plot. Up to now we have accepted Patricia's betrayal of Michel on its own terms as an *acte gratuit*. It now exposes itself to a different reading.

* * *

Throughout the film Patricia is bombarded with a series of misleading, gnomic and contradictory statements about the meaning of life. There is a spate of these at her airport interview with a celebrity. Finally she manages to get in her own question, which is both urgent and, in the context, rather stupid. "What is your greatest ambition?" she asks. Though his reply—"to become immortal, and then to die"—might pass as an artist's insolent flourish, it cannot help her; and

help is what she needs. Patricia is forced into fabricating naive formulae so that she can cope with life. In order to be independent of men, she claims, she has to earn a living. Yet she is waiting for some lead which she cannot discover. Her American friend baffles her with remarks she cannot understand about books she only boasts of having read. She would like to love Michel; but he makes her play his game which drains words of their meaning. Perhaps her hand really shook with emotion when she could not light her cigarette for the first time, but the rules force her to "gag" back at the accusation. Michel might be sincere about his Rome invitation, but how is she to judge when he won't allow her to know him? He denies her the full choice of commitment and rejection and uses her simply to explore the spectrum of his own attitudes.

All she can do is retaliate. Her betrayal is a desperate attempt to force him to commit himself either one way or another. But he denies her even this gratification by the enigma of his death. She is left, at last, still unenlightened, still not knowing whether she is a sex machine waiting to be worked, or a woman waiting to be loved. Not knowing who she is, she cannot tell us; and so, in the final shot, she looks out at us enigmatically. Yet in psycho-analytic terms the enigma does betray a meaning. For is this not the face of the seventeen-year-old schizophrenic described by R. D. Laing in *The Divided Self*, in whom, beneath the vacancy and terrible placidity of the catatonic trance, there still lurked the desolation of irreparable loss, and of whom, though she was a hopeless case, the author could still conclude: "There was a belief (however psychotic a belief it was, it was still a form of faith in something of great value in herself) that there was something of great worth deeply lost or buried inside her, as yet undiscovered by herself or by anyone. If one could go deep into the depth of the dark sea one would discover the bright gold, or if one could get fathoms down one would discover the pearl at the bottom of the sea."?

NOTES

(1) THE REASON FOR this is complicated. If we sever the connection between an object and its environment, we disrupt the harmony by which parts express wholes. A foot, severed for demonstration, remains significant within a physiological context. But lacking both this context and the body it expresses, the severed foot becomes thoroughly enigmatic and even sinister, as in W. F. Harvey's horror story in which a severed hand scuttles after its victims like a spider and strangles them. Perhaps such inexpressive objects become sinister because they provide a handy focus for phobias. By contrast, in *The Brothers Karamazov*, Grushenka's foot is for Dimitri almost over-expressive of her sensuality, becoming in fact a fetish.

The Mona Lisa was, for the nineteenth century, the supreme enigma. This was due less to the ambiguity of her famous smile than to her isolation from any usual context, amongst the rocks. Consequently, rather like the severed foot—though reinforced by mysterious feelings about the eternal feminine—she acted as focus for all and every feeling. Pater remarks that "Lady Lisa might stand as . . . the symbol of the modern idea." And indeed it looks as though this still holds. Could not the last shot of Jean Seberg's face in *Breathless* be its contemporary equivalent?

(2) THIS FAILURE TO embody insights is to be found in a number of directors. In *Rocco*, Visconti fails to find a suitable form for those unmotivated bursts of violence which characterise his anarchistic vision of experience. Since he tries to develop these within the outworn formal husks of 19th-century literature, the result is not tragedy but grand opera. Ingmar Bergman too cannot find a form for his existentialist insights; and so resigns himself to describing rather than enacting them. His films contain much sophisticated by-play around a philosophy of appearance. They even produce

symbols like the clock without hands. Yet the vision remains intellectualised, and the films fail to make their potentially powerful impact.

(3) THE PROCESS BY which morality breaks down into images can be traced most interestingly through the films of Andrzej Wajda. In direct relation to the director's increasing scepticism about their ideology, the plots disintegrate; to be replaced by an unaccounted for lyricism. In *Kanal* plot controls every element of structure, but by *Ashes and Diamonds* it barely contains certain lyrical sequences like the polonaise at dawn. In *Lotna*, his most recent film to be shown here, plot has collapsed completely into a twitter of trivial ironies. The only positive elements left are images—of a white horse, of a flaming emblem—which have no significant connection with the action.

(4) THE COMPARISON HERE with the symbolist aesthetic is irresistible. It is only odd that painting and the cinema should have taken so long to develop similarly. The paradox about this art is that the more successful it is, the more it will appear autonomous. Films like *Breathless* are similar to a symbolist poem in that they try to become an image from which one cannot generalise; and which sets up hazards to our doing so by reminding us that we are controlled by the artist's mind.

(5) WITHOUT A PUBLIC morality our feelings lack sanction, and we become hesitant about their importance. Consequently we play them down: we develop a morality which is "cool". Our repressed energy, in compensation, finds release in violence, in living for "kicks".

the festivals

VENICE
MOSCOW
EDINBURGH



Pier Paolo Pasolini's "Accattone".

Venice

SUNDAY, AUGUST 27.—Arrive at the height of the afternoon heat, change and go straight to the Palazzo del Cinema to unlock my *casella* (little glass locker containing press hand-outs, invitations to parties, out-of-competition Peruvian films, Mass, etc.). The *casella* is so crammed—the Festival has been on a week—that my efforts to dislodge what's in it result in a good half sliding irretrievably down the back. But I rescue the all-important catalogue of events, and find I have missed the new Kurosawa, the new Wajda, Autant-Lara's Yugoslav film *Thou Shalt Not Kill*, Albicocco's Balzac adaptation *La Fille aux yeux d'or*, De Seta's first feature *Banditi a Orgosolo* (highly praised by Penelope Gilliatt in today's *Observer*), the Czech entry and *Summer and Smoke*.

Parched, weighted down with Festival literature, anxious to return to the hotel and unpack, I am dragooned into staying put by John Gillett, who obviously doesn't trust me to return for the Information Section performance at 6 p.m. This turns

out to be the prolific Torre Nilsson's latest, *Piel de Verano* (*Summer Skin*). Beautifully set on the Punta del Este, it tells of a young man suffering from an incurable disease, and a girl who strikes a bargain with her raffish grandmother, mistress of the invalid's father, whereby she will keep him occupied during his last months in return for a year in Paris with all found once he dies. Seduced by his nurse, treated with bullying contempt by his manservant, the hero falls in love with his beautiful companion who simulates love in return. Suddenly, he dismays her by recovering, she confesses the truth, he commits suicide. *Summer Skin* is a penetrating anecdote, with a sure feeling for atmosphere and a witty script by Beatriz Guido which sharpens its claws on Argentina's idle, hypocritical rich. As so often with Torre Nilsson, one can detect incongruous influences—Kalatozov, Malle, even Veit Harlan (the love scene on the beach). But these don't detract overmuch from Nilsson's unusually sober pacing and camerawork, and he certainly knows how to imply with subtle effects the hidden mantraps of shallow feeling.



Tatsuya Nakadai in Kurosawa's "Yojimbo".

In the evening the first and undoubtedly the worst of Italy's four official entries: **Vanina Vanini**, after Stendhal. Directed by Rossellini, this is a series of lifeless colour *tableaux*, framed by an excessively busy zoom lens, tracing the doomed passion of a countess (Sandra Milo) for a charcoal-burner revolutionary (Laurent Terzieff) who gives himself up when she betrays his friends to the police. Two scaffold scenes and two whippings later, the countess is hammering on the inevitable convent door.

August 28.—Kurosawa's **Yojimbo** (*The Bodyguard*) is shown again. A solitary samurai arrives in a village decimated by some long-lasting feud. Solicited by both factions, he ends up concluding it isn't worth his while to join either. Gradually, by a logical process of double-crossing, he tames the village and stalks away. Mifune is titanic in the part, and richly deserves his acting prize; Tatsuya Nakadai, the Kaji of last year's *Ningen no Joken*, is a close second as the smiling villain, a Widmark type who keeps his pistol-hand tucked hieratically inside the breast of his kimono. Stylistically I suspect this is Kurosawa's most commanding film; only one of his Eastern-Westerns, but visually faultless and highly sophisticated in its satire on violence and human weakness.

Less sophistication, less consistency of character, in the evening's competition film, **Peace to Whom Enters**. Three Russian soldiers in the last days of the war successfully evade the enemy while transporting a pregnant German girl to hospital, where the first act of her new-born baby is to relieve itself on a pile of weapons. This sequence, and the spanking of a surly Nazi boy-soldier, arouse the audience to a frenzy of cheers. Inventive imagery, signal honesty of intention, but the film is marred by a rather silly narrative which doesn't stay in the mind. At the time, however, I was taken with its Thirty-ish vigour and sweep, so much so that I rushed up to the boyish directors, Aleksander Alov and Vladimir Naumov (they previously made *Restless Youth*), and pumped them by the hand.

Caught in this transport of enthusiasm by Nicholas Ray, also very much impressed by the film's "direct and simple power of communication", we sit up talking till 3 a.m. in a group which includes Curtis Harrington, Lotte Eisner, two English journalists and a rich American lady impresario. Ray calmly and cogently remonstrates with the lady impres-

ario, who walked out of the film after half-an-hour, for running down all didactic art.

August 29.—Not my day. Afternoon: **Square of Violence**, a Yugoslav slog through the Resistance in English dialogue (why not, since its stars include Broderick Crawford, Valentina Cortese and Bibi Andersson?) about conscience v. loyalty; and **The False Student**, one of those potentially interesting problem films à la Phil Karlson which have become a staple Japanese commodity. Evening: Resnais' **L'Année Dernière à Marienbad**, winner of the Golden Lion of St. Mark. I understand the award—the film is technically unique—but absolutely nothing else. I can only say I suspect the film of triviality and an aggravating determination to be chic at all costs; also that I'm probably being unfair. My French in any case is inadequate.

August 30.—Meeting with Leopoldo Torre Nilsson, who is on the Jury and therefore not allowed to discuss the competition entries. But he is obviously fascinated by the Resnais, and a bit disappointed at my reservations about **Prisioneros de una Noche**, a first feature by David José Kohon, a young protégé. Actually this is a passionately felt tragedy about a rootless young man who meets and loves a dance hostess, but loses her when she is driven to the murder of a loathsomely persistent older man. The subject is trite, though this in itself wouldn't matter if Kohon hadn't doused a lot of it in effects from Carné and Kubrick. But I liked the restrained first half, and the Lucia Bosé heroine (Maria Varner). Kohon might well be an exceptional talent in the making.

In the evening **Il Brigante**, Castellani's bid for a major come-back. Ten months on location in Calabria, with everything from forest glades and chickens to a Russian-style peasant revolt arranged for maximum formal beauty, ending in the hero's madness and an orgy of machine-gun fire. Presumably an attempt to carry on where *Terra Trema* left off, but where is Castellani's own style? The last straw is a meandering story which, as it plods on into its third hour in untranslated dialect (why don't the Italians ever subtitle their own films for Festival audiences?), becomes unbearably tedious.

August 31.—Everyone (except for Gillett and Torre Nilsson) in apparent agreement. Pier Paolo Pasolini's **Accattone** is a real eye-opener. From the backstreet life of Roman slum boys Pasolini hews images of ingrained cruelty and squalor. His picture of a gang of real-life layabouts, and of the doomed, ailing hanger-on Accattone who is nearly killed by a day's work, is done in a harsh, ragged style, emotionally committed and searing. Subsidiary moments of native wit and gentleness explode into scenes of stark violence—notably the gang's beating-up of a girl—which are accompanied by some sublimely heroic Brandenburg Concertos. There is obviously a hint of Genêt's outlook in Pasolini; a taste, too, for surrealist, broad daylight dream sequences reminiscent of Buñuel. But the film, Pasolini's first, is entirely his own conception; it is perhaps the most truly memorable in the Festival.

September 1.—Another eye-opening first feature by a young Italian. Ermanno Olmi's **Il Posto** is a fresh, kindly and sharp-witted comedy about a young man's efforts to become a clerk in a big business office. It introduces an actor who could be the biggest find since Buster Keaton, assuming he remains unaffected by the resemblance; and re-introduces an element of everyday, documentary-trained satire that has been virtually absent from Italian screens since *Sunday in August*.

Victim, the evening's film, is generally well received by the Italians because it's "unhypocritical" and "about something". It causes quite a flurry on the free beach the next morning ("L'adorable Dirk Bogarde, quelle gentillesse, quelle sensibilité . . .")

Saturday, September 2.—The last of the big Italian guns, and surely a bit of a pea-shooter. In other words the long-awaited De Sica-Zavattini **Il Giudizio Universale** — a multi-episodic, star-studded fantasy about the reactions of the world when a loud voice in the sky over Naples fixes an appointment for the end of the world at 6 p.m. Smooth, sentimental,

obvious stuff, with the Last Judgment evasively postponed and all ending convivially at a ball in the San Carlo Opera House, shot in a sudden confusion of colour, and held in aid of the unemployed. *Il Giudizio* doesn't win a prize—apart from those already mentioned the awards went to Suzanne Flon as best actress in the Autant-Lara, to the De Seta (best first film) and the Alov-Naumov (most original film)—but will undoubtedly be a box-office hit. See it by all means, but please don't miss *Accattone* and *Il Posto* when they come to the London Festival.

PETER JOHN DYER

Moscow

NO FILM FESTIVAL IS more whole-hearted than Moscow. For two weeks the entire city is given over to it. Mr. Krushchev graces the opening; Mrs. Furtseva, the energetic and attractive Minister of Culture, is constantly on hand; the giant Moskva Hotel is turned over to Festival guests; Manège Square becomes an open-air exhibition of posters and stills; and people talk about very little else but the films. Not everything goes right, of course. Before the Festival people were laying odds against the new Rossiya Cinema (which has a restraint and elegance rare in Soviet architecture; but perhaps it is not finished) being ready in time. It was: but it was several days before the sound and air conditioning functioned quite as they should. On the whole, though, the inevitable confusion of film festivals is better mastered in Moscow than elsewhere. Where bureaucracy breaks down, the Russian gift for improvisation generally saves the day.

Visconti, who was on the Jury (which also included Sergei Yutkevitch as President, Joris Ivens, Joshua Logan and, from this country, Roger Manvell), described the Festival as "outstanding for its more correct orientation and exact targets . . . its pleasant, hearty and—above all—serious atmosphere." It is avowedly a socialist festival; but the hosts lean backwards to avoid any kind of political discrimination. Even *Sunrise at Campobello*—the first American entry to the major annual Eastern European Festival—was treated with a kindly respect it hardly deserved. With resounding understatement a Soviet critic mildly complained that "although it is interesting in many ways, it lacks discovery, which is so important for art . . ." If there is any partiality, it lies in the special prominence that Moscow gives to the new cinemas—Cuba, Nigeria, Ghana, Mali, and so on. Culturally, of course, this policy is irreproachable; but one cannot overlook its political expedience.

The Festival demonstrated most clearly the assurance with which Soviet artists are asserting their emancipation from the restrictions of Stalinist aesthetics. We had Ilya Ehrenburg characterising the success of the new cinema: "In *Ballad of a Soldier* the urge for modesty and self-restraint—so understandable after the period of false monumentality and stilted obligatoriness in works of art—has manifested itself. In *Ballad of a Soldier* the lofty is depicted through the commonplace, sometimes the trivial. The national character of the material is clearly evident, but spectators all over the world are touched, and feel the same excitement and emotion." Soviet critics are enthusiastic in their appreciation of films as varied as *La Dolce Vita*, *Shadows* and *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*. A retrospective series of archive films ("Films You Have Not Seen") included several which could certainly not have been revived until recent years, such as Chiauarelli's *Khabarda!* with its scenario by the Soviet dramatist Tretyakov, an early victim of the Terror.

Then, of course, there was the Soviet entry itself, Grigori Chukrai's *Clear Sky*. It starts off like just another in the cycle of Soviet romantic-realist films, with grandiose images,



Leopoldo Torre Nilsson's "Piel de Verano".

impassioned virtuoso montage passages, plushy music. A young girl falls in love with a handsome pilot. After four days of love he returns to the front, she to her factory, pregnant with his child. He is reported killed in action and is awarded a posthumous Order of the Red Banner.

Then the film takes a novel turn. The airman returns; he has been a prisoner of war. He becomes a victim of Stalinist policy towards returned prisoners. (Why did he not shoot himself? Why, unless he was a traitor, did the Germans not shoot him?) His party card is withdrawn; he cannot work. A less lucky man would have been executed. Sarcastically he quotes the official claptrap: you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs; when a tree is felled, chips must fly. Again and again he and the girl demand, "Who is to blame?" The answer is implied in the gigantic statue of Stalin which stands in the party headquarters. Then comes the news of Stalin's death; and Chukrai illustrates it with the bold banality of a montage of melting ice. The hero is called back before the party committee to receive his Red Banner.

The film surprised Moscow's guests more than the Muscovites themselves, who say that these things have already been said in literature, and that in any case Chukrai's picture is over-simplified: all is not yet clear sky; nor was everything so completely clouded before. All the same, it is only a year or so since Bondarchuk had to side-step the same questions in *Destiny of a Man*. The Soviet film is still on the move.

Old dogmas die hard, of course, and there are still opponents of the new tendencies. Khachachurian was complaining publicly (at a Forum on "The Artist and His Time") that "genuine innovation does not belong to the pursuit of questionable even if highly refined formalistic art, but to the search for profound understanding of reality." What is important, though, is that people can now discuss the aesthetic



Grigori Chukrai's "Clear Sky".



Don Juan (Ulf Palme) and attendant demon in Ingmar Bergman's "The Devil's Eye".

and not simply the political significance of 'socialist realism'; and 'formalism' is no longer a capital charge.

Some of Moscow's guests seemed to be lagging behind these developments, however, or else they thought they would give more pleasure to their hosts with tendentious tracts which looked backwards to the darkest days of the Stalinist cinema. The Chinese, Vietnamese, Mexican, Argentine, Cuban and Rumanian entries were all more or less dehumanised and turgid pieces of revolutionary polemic. China submitted also a neighbourly documentary called *Cuba Fights*; the title of *The Guinean People's Struggle Against Belgian Aggression in the Congo* is equally explicit.

Kaneto Shindo's *The Island* made a great impression and shared the main prize with *Clear Sky*. (A rather sceptical Polish critic said it was an apt complement of a poor film of major importance and an excellent one of no importance whatever.) Shindo, in the belief that "a Japanese saying that eyes say more than the tongue... is directly related to cinema," has made a silent film with a splash or two of sound (a slap, a cry) thrown in for shock effect. It is a compelling and accomplished impression of the life of a poor farming family on an island without water—a sort of masochistic *Man of Aran*, with an occasional glimpse of luxury steamers in the background and a delightful sequence of the family on a trip to town, to heighten its social significance.

It is an unusual pleasure to acclaim the British turn-out at an international festival. The delegation was the largest from any country and—with Anthony Asquith, Peter Finch, Shirley Anne Field, Bill Travers and Virginia McKenna—was immensely popular. *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, *hors concours*, was chosen to open the Festival. Critical reaction was enthusiastic; official feeling was equivocal, it appears. Mrs. Furtseva was full of admiration for the film, but rather shocked. Whether it was with a woman's eye or that of an arbiter of socialist morality that she looked at the film, she said that she felt it was not the sort of work that should be shown to the larger public.

The social impact of *The Trials of Oscar Wilde* was perhaps more curious. Of course critics complained that "other socially more important aspects of the famous writer's life could have been taken to provide a fuller and pithier picture of his moral make-up" (G. Kapralov). Still, the effect of

bringing into open discussion a subject that had been practically ignored since Stalin re-introduced the repressive measures against homosexuals which had been abandoned in 1917, was significant. The film may have been a minor Wolfenden for the U.S.S.R.

This British success was reflected in the prizes. We ran away with four—three for *The Trials of Oscar Wilde*; one for the British Transport short *River of Life*. But Moscow awards will carry more prestige when the Festival authorities are less profligate with the prizes. As it was practically every film seemed to get some award, and few of the fifty guest countries left empty-handed. Someone must decide whether a prize is intended to reward achievement or to encourage potential merit.

DAVID ROBINSON

Edinburgh

IN ACCORDANCE WITH annual custom, the Second World War was again fought across Edinburgh's screens, although this year we also had in the TV documentary *Polaris* a foretaste of the possible future. Rockets permitting, future historians will have a fascinating time as they analyse the film archives' evidence of the subtle refinements in attitudes to war as it recedes in time. Edinburgh has always been well supported by film-makers whose countries were strongly scarred by the war, and it is thus an observation post in this continent of shifting war ethics.

This year's reconnaissance confirms recent developments: the day of the spectacular battle sequence is ending. Today's shots are only establishing shots; the battleground is now in the mind. With *Panic on a Train*, *Alba Regia* and *Love Under the Gallows*, we have films about the war, Nazi occupation and resistance to it, informed almost entirely by personal motivations. *Panic on a Train*, Kazimierz Kutz's third feature, describes a minute incident during the Occupation, when an assortment of Polish people are marooned at a small station. It sets out to show how those who survived this period cannot simply forget the war; yet much of the characterisation and treatment are deliberately oblique, and the film achieves its aim without anyone being killed. Mihaly Szemes's *Alba Regia* is concerned with the moral awakening of a Hungarian surgeon as his town is alternately occupied and re-occupied by Germans and Russians. His ethical dilemma is provoked, however, not by the pressures of Nazism or Communism, but by love for a Red Army agent whom he unwittingly shelters (a rather colourless performance by Tatiana Samoilova). The film has its moments of individuality, but is too protracted to make the most of them.

West Germany's *Love Under the Gallows*, directed by Edwin Zbonek, presents a story of Greek partisans. Those irresponsibly shooting the Wehrmacht are led by a man who enjoys the confidence neither of his men nor of the peasants; he can best be described as a patriotic sadist. Finally, for proper reasons, he hangs two old peasants we have been encouraged to know and respect, who have been giving shelter to Greek and dying German alike. I found the film morally weird, with no real conception of life under the Occupation; Carl Wery and Annie Rosar, playing the peasants, expertly produced the most lovable *kitsch* encountered in years. To be fair, it ought to be reported that many at Edinburgh greatly admired this film.

The new Ingmar Bergman, a comedy-morality called *The Devil's Eye*, is disappointing. The idea of sending Don Juan from Hell to seduce a modern girl (parson's daughter) whose chastity is the cause of the Devil's sty (*vide* Irish legend for plot origin) is a pleasant one with sure-fire gags; but poor Juan is outclassed by Bergman's soul-searching. As in most of his films the lower orders, unheeding the world's cares, come off best; Juan's servant, continent for 300 years, succeeds with

(Continued on page 207)

IN THE PICTURE

Paris Notes

LOUIS MARCORELLES writes: After a slow start, television is beginning seriously to affect box-office takings in France. With almost 2,500,000 sets licensed, against only a million two years ago, and with a second TV channel in the offing, it now represents a real threat to the cinema. Industry circles foresee the closing down of about a quarter of our cinemas in the fairly near future. In Paris, three cinemas in the well-to-do district of the 16th *arrondissement* are definitely shutting this year, while the decision as to whether the huge Gaumont Palace should become a garage hinges partly on the box-office returns of *Spartacus*. It's only in the poorer districts of the Midi that box-office receipts are still holding up.

Inevitably this falling off in earnings means some painful reassessments for producers and distributors. Three types of film now share most of the market: the by-products of *Ben-Hur* and *Spartacus*, primitive spectacles made as international co-productions; the blockbusters like *La Vérité* and *Exodus*; and the young independent films which can now get a wide showing abroad on the strength of the reputation of directors like Truffaut, Godard and Resnais. It will be interesting to see how Godard's *Une Femme est une Femme*, made in colour and CinemaScope, does at the box-office. How will the public take its broken narrative and rough language, here used even more systematically than in *Breathless*? Resnais' *L'Année Dernière à Marienbad* is an even tougher challenge.

There has been talk of organising an international chain of specialised cinemas to give films of this kind an outlet. Resnais, Truffaut and Godard are all in agreement about this. Such a system would mean low budget pictures, which could easily cover their costs; and Truffaut continues to lead the way with his *Jules et Jim*, even though he has an international star in Jeanne Moreau. In adapting this semi-autobiographical novel by Henri Roché, he has followed his usual methods: location work, a shooting script broken up into short, sketch-like scenes, improvisation during filming. We follow the friendship of two artists, French and German, who set out in the early 1900's to lead an ideal Bohemian existence. For the first time, Truffaut is acting as his own producer. He regards *Tirez sur le Pianiste* as a set-back, because it didn't attract the mass public, and is afraid he may have baffled people by too much use of flashback. Ideally it would be wonderful to make films for audiences who know their Welles and Ophüls; but in practice Truffaut would like his films to reach everyone. He's also producer of *Tire au Flanc*, the first feature by Claude de Givray, his assistant on *Les Mistons*. Based on the vaudeville by Mouézy-Eon once filmed by Renoir, this army comedy has been adapted by Truffaut, de Givray and its original author, now aged eighty-three.

Chabrol, after a series of commercial setbacks, is to make his next film in Germany, in the low-budget conditions in which he shot *Le Beau Serge*. Later he's to film the life of George Sand, from a script on which Françoise Sagan is engaged. Jean-Luc Godard will soon be shooting an account of a flirtation between a girl of the left and a young man of the right. No doubt he'll take the opportunity to develop some of his favourite ideas—that the left is a right which doesn't know it, and *vice versa*. An ambitious producer is preparing a sketch film on youth and love in several countries, with Truffaut handling the French episode. Here we will meet again the two boys from *Les Quatre Cents Coups*, now adolescent and busy chasing girls. The German sketch is to be directed by Marcel Ophüls, son of Max, and the Italian by Rossellini's son; no one, apparently, has yet thought about an English episode.

Three of the French cinema's more important talents are also back at work again. Firstly Roger Leenhardt, who after a fourteen

year gap is now making *Le Rendezvous de Minuit*, with Lilli Palmer, Michel Auclair and Maurice Ronet. In this a middle-aged woman begins to identify herself with the star of a certain film, seeing it again and again, feeling that her own life coincides with that of the heroine. The film ends with a suicide; and we leave the woman (played by Lilli Palmer, who is also the film star) preparing for the same action. Leenhardt doesn't attempt to disguise the fact that his story is a hundred per cent. Pirandellian in outline. Jacques Baratier, director of *Goha*, is collaborating with the playwright Audiberti on *La Poupée*, an attractively exuberant project in which the Polish actor Zbigniew Cybulski plays a Latin American dictator. And Agnès Varda, finally, has just finished shooting her second feature, after a seven year gap since *La Pointe Courte*. This is *Cléo de Cinq à Sept*, or two hours in the life of a young woman, the leading part being played by the singer Corinne Marchand.

Festival in Montreal

GUY COTE writes: "Film festivals are a dime a dozen these days," said one distributor. "What's so different about your Festival?" This question, which the organisers of some 117 so-called "International Film Festivals" are finding it increasingly difficult to answer, was often asked about Montreal as a flood of cables and transatlantic telephone calls emerged from its secretariat, inviting feature and short films to participate non-competitively in what many journalists now call North America's foremost film event.

In all, twelve of the eighteen features shown (all in one crowded week) received their North American premières, as did the majority of the 80-odd shorts. Total audiences for the week numbered 43,000. For three days preceding the Festival proper, some forty filmmakers from abroad and Canada met at the National Film Board's production centre in Montreal to exchange views on film-making. Alexandre Alexeieff chaired the Seminar, which was attended by François Truffaut, Jiri Weiss, Tadeusz Makarszynski, Gian Vittorio Baldi and Masaki Kobayashi. Denis and Terry Sanders came from Hollywood, and Morris Engel headed a large contingent of independent film-makers from New York.

Variety called the Seminar "as secretive as the Kremlin." Indeed, the meeting carried out its intention to avoid agendas; it did not



"Rendezvous de Minuit": Roger Leenhardt on the set with Lilli Palmer.

publish or even seek conclusions about the state of world film-making. Its basic aim was to provide film-makers with an opportunity to reflect on their own situation as artists and possibly to seek the questions which they, as individuals, wished to ask themselves. "If there are concrete results," said one of the organisers, "it should be felt in the films these directors will make, not in their declarations to the press."

One concrete result, however, was that Kobayashi introduced to Western audiences his latest and possibly greatest work: *A Soldier's Prayer*, the final section of his trilogy on *The Human Condition*, which relates Kaji's flight from Northern Manchuria shortly after the end of the war. Kobayashi submits his hero to almost indescribable sufferings, and Kaji finally dies in the solitude of a snow-covered field before reaching the village where his wife is waiting. Couched in epic form, and helped by some spectacularly strong CinemaScope camerawork, *A Soldier's Prayer* is one of the most powerful anti-war films ever made. Though it was shown without sub-titles (but with an improvised English commentary), more than 1,000 people who had come to a midnight screening rose at 3.30 a.m. to give Mr. Kobayashi a ten-minute ovation.

Although the programme included blockbusters such as *La Dolce Vita* (replacing *The Connection*, which was withdrawn at the last moment), this year's choice of feature films was based on the decision to introduce the works of comparatively unknown directors. Torre Nilsson's *The Hand in the Trap*, Jacques Demy's *Lola*, Jean Rouch's *Chronique d'un Été* and *La Pyramide Humaine* (which some critics compared with the N.F.B.'s own "Candid Eye" films) and Kazimierz Kutz's *Panic on a Train* were all shown before sell-out audiences. The strongest contrasts, however, came from the obsessed soul-searchings of Antonioni's *L'Avventura* and *La Notte* and the warm-hearted romanticism of Chukhai's *Ballad of a Soldier*. There were few Montrealers ready to defend both aesthetic antipodes. Jiri Weiss's statement that "Art must always be strongly national, though never nationalistic," and André Martin's that "Maybe we should look upon cinema as a necessary toy," summed up two increasingly divergent views of contemporary cinema.

The inauguration of the Montreal Festival last year coincided with a relaxation of Quebec's once notoriously strict censorship. Films with themes of adultery, anti-clericalism and divorce used to be ruthlessly cut or banned outright. No films from a Communist country, however innocuous, could be shown in the province (the ban once extended to the selling of vodka). But now all this is in the past, and *Hiroshima mon Amour* may well have been the final sacrifice. Shown intact at last year's festival, it was slashed by 14 minutes for general distribution. The resulting wail of public protest brought about the introduction of a more liberal element to the censorship board.



The provincial government has supported the festival with grants, as has Montreal's city administration. The Canada Council, similar to the Arts Council in Britain, gave money for the seminar. This new official attitude to film reflects the artistic evolution which the province of Quebec is enjoying today; and it is no secret that François Truffaut, during his stay in Montreal, examined the possibilities of producing both feature and short films here.

Commemorating Méliès

RALPH STEPHENSON writes: Méliès—conjurer, showman, artist, author, producer, designer, director, cameraman, distributor, exhibitor, inventor. The versatility of Leonardo, the oddity of Douanier Rousseau, the exuberant fertility of Simonon. This year the Cinémathèque Française is celebrating his centenary with an imposing exhibition in the Louvre. The catalogue, expensive, well illustrated and with several excellent articles, lists nearly 1,000 exhibits.

Outstanding among them is a giant-size reconstructed model of the Snowman from *The Conquest of the Pole*, the first of all cinema monsters, twelve years earlier than the dragon from *Siegfried*, twenty-one years earlier than *King Kong*. There are many examples of Méliès' designs for films, sketches, caricatures, posters, cartoons, programmes—even oil paintings. Furniture and bric-a-brac from his house; costumes; medals; conjuring gear, and (like prehistoric monsters) early cinema projectors and cameras. Family photographs; verses composed for autograph albums; inventories, accounts, certificates, letters. There are extracts from the curious memoirs written in retirement, which he presented, presumably for a private joke, as if they were written about him by somebody else. And there is a model of the world's first film studio, looking rather like the hothouse at Kew.

Despite his many-sidedness Méliès is to be remembered above all as a film-maker, and the exhibition includes daily screenings of his films. His prolific output is a legend which seems to have grown with the years. The exhibition catalogue makes a sobering comment on the usual claim of 4,000 films by listing in an "approximate filmography" no more than 400 titles. The best of the survivors still hold an audience with their charm and invention. All in all he was one of the strangest, richest and most endearing characters of early film history; and one can say of this exhibition that it does him full justice.

Billy Budd

THOMAS PICTON writes: Bowing to his passion for military rigmarole and ethics, Peter Ustinov has been spending the last month at Elstree shooting the interior scenes of his version of Herman Melville's naval story *Billy Budd*, of which he is producer, director, adaptor and star. Billy Budd is played by Terry Stamp, whom the company made some show of discovering before work started. He is a young, serious actor belonging to Sloane Square rather than Shaftesbury Avenue. He dresses in a black leather jacket and 13/- trousers which his mother washes with his shirts. Other parts are played by John Neville, Paul Rogers and David McCallum as fellow officers, and Robert Ryan as Claggart. Melvyn Douglas, far from his days of sophisticated comedy, appears as a roughened sail-maker.

Two decks have been built at Elstree. One for dialogue scenes which could not be recorded when the unit was shooting at sea off Alicante, and the other for the trial and other interior sequences. This includes the Captain's cabin and gun room, completely encased in steel scaffolding and mounted twenty feet above the studio floor on hydraulic rockers. It looks more like a testing frame for a new jet airliner than a film set. Inside the cabin, naval paraphernalia, guns and armaments together with lights and camera and film crew are crowded into an area little bigger than a suburban living-room and with only six feet of headroom.

Ustinov cultivates a vague hysteria while filming. "You can't do this type of thing solemnly," he says. Beardless, and dressed for his part of Captain Vere, he ambles round the set, exploiting his figure along with his witticisms. Only one man—Bob Krasker, the lighting cameraman—is solemn. He darts around the set with a viewing filter and a big black box of a light meter overcoming dozens of shadows with seemingly as many lights.

Rachel Roberts in "For the Love of Sheila", the film Charles Frend has just completed for Eyeline about a young girl and her foster parents.

Lord of the Flies

AN ABANDONED PINEAPPLE CANNERY, with somewhat contradictory signs over the front gate—*Lord of the Flies*, *Bienvenido* and under it, in English, *No Admittance*—is Peter Brook's headquarters for filming the William Golding novel.

After a four month search throughout the Caribbean, Brook and Lewis Allen, the producer, decided on Vieques, an island fifteen miles east of Puerto Rico, where they found virgin beaches, tropical foliage and would presumably have peace and quiet. The lower sign on the gate is an answer to the curiosity aroused on the part of U.S. Marines stationed on the island. During the first weeks of shooting the Marines were often in patrol helicopters and would hover over the beach to get an unobstructed bird's-eye view, effectively ruining all sound shooting. This problem had been solved and by the third week, when we visited Vieques, an amiable truce had been arranged.

Lord of the Flies is Lewis Allen's second feature under the banner of Allen-Hodgdon Productions. Like *The Connection*, which preceded it, the film was financed under a limited partnership. It also resembles *The Connection* in being an off-beat story, produced without any stars. The cast consists of thirty-three boys, aged six to twelve, either British or with a British accent, an essential ingredient of the story. The plot concerns a planeload of British schoolboys evacuated from their homes during a war. The novel is purposely vague, but one gets the feeling it is a future war and that the rest of the world is being destroyed. The story starts after the plane has crashed on a deserted tropical island. No adults survive and the boys set about trying to organise a community until, they hope, rescue arrives. Gradually primitive instincts begin to emerge until, by the end, they have cast off any veneer of civilisation and descended to savagery. On one level Golding's novel is an adventure story; on another a telling parable of man's basic character.

In his search for freshness of approach Peter Brook has selected his unit from among technicians who have had little or no experience in film. Tom Hollyman, the director of photography, is a well-known still photographer. Brook visited him in San Juan, they talked, looked at books, paintings, photographs. "He has an unerring eye," says Hollyman, "for going straight to the genuinely photographic quality of a still. We talked together about many things, not only this particular film, and we discovered that our 'aesthetics' coincided. It was then that he asked me to do *Flies*. I complained that I had never even handled a movie camera. Brook thought that was just fine."

Carter Harman, the sound man, is a composer who lives in Puerto Rico. Gerry Feil, second cameraman, also happens to be a good sound engineer but his professional experience has mainly been in theatre. This is his first film.

The problems attendant on keeping the cast happy have been resolved by running the company as though it were a summer camp. On the front porch of the cannery there was a ping-pong table with a lively semi-doubles match in progress: two boys versus one counsellor. Piles of dog-eared comic books on odd chairs and benches attested to the age and literary preferences of the inhabitants. Inside, the huge shed was divided into several rooms. First the dormitory for the "young 'uns", rows of neatly made-up cots for the younger boys, who go to bed early. On one of them staunchly sat an elderly and time-worn teddy bear.

To the left was the kitchen and dining hall, proudly displayed by the Puerto Rican cook, who was obviously having



"Lord of the Flies": the 'hunters' escape a bush fire.

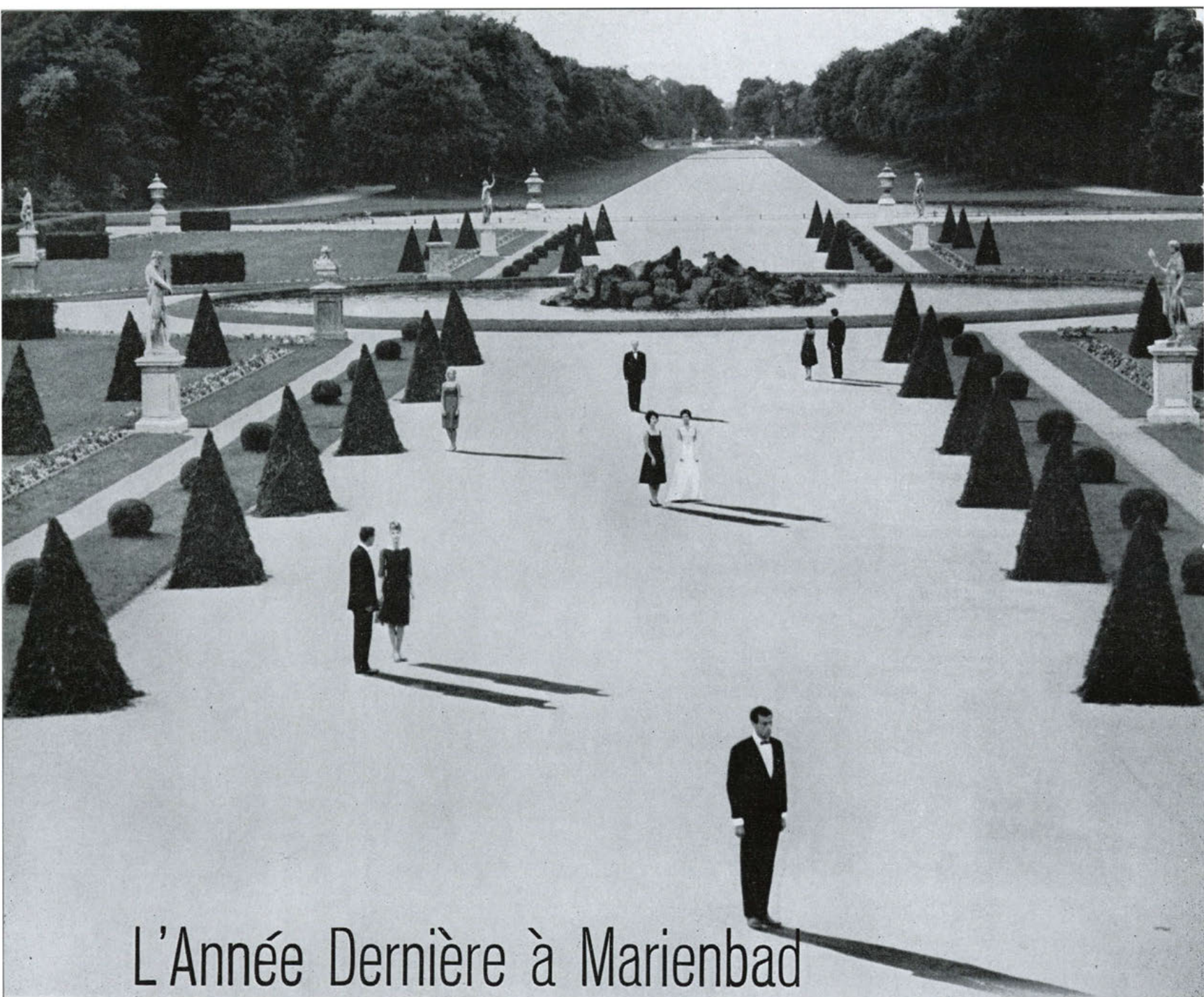
as good a time as the boys. Another room housed a crafts and recreation area, where the boys could paint and model clay when not required on the set. On display were a row of gaily painted coconut masks the boys had made and, on another wall, posters which had been entered in a contest. The copy on them ran to variations of "For good entertainment see Peter Brook's *Lord of the Flies*," although some gave each other star billing. At the back of the shed were a dormitory for the older boys, the "office" and the wardrobe department, which was lined by rows of boys' clothes in varying stages of decrepitude. Behind this was a small stage which was being used while we were there for some close-up shooting.

A palm-thatched shelter had been constructed in one corner for the scene where Simon comes back from his solitary expedition in the middle of the night. Five or six boys were to be sleeping in the shelter. Everybody was correctly arranged when Brook called for quiet and then for the slate. A young assistant, aged about ten, stepped up, remarked in an offhand tone that the previous take had been incorrectly numbered but he had taken care of it, clapped the stick and ducked out of range. It turned out he was correct, and the camera began to track across the sleeping boys.

Part of the cast has become intensely interested in the techniques of movie-making since someone gave them an 8mm. camera. They are making a film called *Something Queer in the Warehouse*. Aside from the title, they will not reveal any details of their production, although they are eager for any tips they can get out of Brook or any of the crew. Brook treats them with grave professional courtesy, to which the boys respond. "The main thing," said Lewis Allen, "is keeping them interested. They're all very bright. If they get bored they'll lose interest in the production. So we keep them occupied all the time."

By the beginning of August, Brook hoped to complete the shooting on Vieques and to move the company to Puerto Rico, where additional action would be shot in El Junque, a rain forest and national park about an hour from San Juan, and in the caves of Arecibo. Shooting had to be completed by the first week of September, but not because the cast had other contractual commitments. It's just that they all had to go back to school.

DOROTHY OSHLAG



L'Année Dernière à Marienbad

by ALAIN ROBBE-GRILLET

ALAIN RESNAIS' *L'Année Dernière à Marienbad*, which will probably have its first English showing at the London Festival, promises to be one of the year's most controversial films, and almost certainly its most perplexing. The setting is a huge baroque hotel; the protagonists are a girl, an older man who, say the film's creators, "appears to be her husband", and another man, seemingly a stranger, who offers the girl a past she at first refuses to accept: a love affair, begun last year at Marienbad. The film apparently offers no clues: it does not differentiate between what seems to be happening now and what may have happened then, between past and present, real and imagined, memory and fantasy.

"I'd like anyone who sees it to interpret it in terms of its meaning to him," Resnais has said. "It's not a 'fixed'

work of art. I'd like to make films which can be approached from all kinds of angles, as one looks at sculpture." Resnais and his scriptwriter, Alain Robbe-Grillet, worked on several possible themes, one of them a detective plot which they would have filmed in the same baroque setting. "But," Resnais says, "if we'd chosen to use the detective story, we might well have found in the end that it added up to almost the same film . . ."

Its creators, in fact, firmly resist any pressures to "explain" their film. This article by Alain Robbe-Grillet, author of *Jealousy* and *Le Voyeur* and a leading name among the younger French novelists, is not an explanation. More valuably, perhaps, it defines some of the ideas about the cinema out of which *L'Année Dernière à Marienbad* developed.

ALAIN RESNAIS AND I HAVE often been asked just how we worked together during the conception, writing and making of *L'Année Dernière à Marienbad*. And if I try to answer this question I may also throw a little light on our attitude to expression in the cinema.

The collaboration between a director and his scriptwriter can take any number of forms—as many different working methods, one might almost say, as there are films. In the traditional commercial cinema, though, the most usual system involves a more or less total separation of scenario and images, story and style, in effect “content” and “form”.

For instance: the writer describes a conversation between two people, providing the words that will be spoken and some indications about the setting; he may go into rather more detail and add comments about gestures or facial expression. But it is always the film director who decides at a later stage how the episode should be photographed, whether the characters are to be seen from a distance or in close-up, what movements the camera is going to make, how the scene will be cut, and so on. And of course one knows that the scene, as it appears to the audience, will take on an entirely different feeling according to whether the images show the couple's faces or their backs, or cut sharply backwards and forwards between the two faces. Or the camera can concentrate on something else while they're talking—on the walls of a room, the street down which they're walking, the waves they're looking at. Take this to its limit, and you can get a sequence in which the words and gestures are so spiritless that they vanish entirely from the spectator's mind, and what he takes away from the scene will be its shapes and the movement of its images, the only things which seem to give it substance.

This is the thing which makes the cinema an art: it creates a reality through its forms. It is through its form that we must look for its real content. And this holds good of any work of art—of the novel, for instance. The choice of a narrative style, a grammatical tense, a rhythm of phrasing, a vocabulary, carries more weight here than the anecdote itself. One can't imagine any novelist who would be content to hand over his story to a *metteur-en-phrases* whose job would be to write out the text for delivery to the reader. The writer's idea when he begins work on a novel allows both for the story and for the way he's going to tell it. Often it's the latter which first takes shape in his mind, in the same way that a painter might think of a canvas composed entirely in vertical lines before deciding that what he's actually going to paint is a group of skyscrapers.

* * *

As far as I'm concerned, at least, it is the same for a film: to think of a screen story, for me, is already to conceive it in images, with all the detail this involves not only of gestures and setting, but of the placing and movement of the camera and the sequence of the shots in editing. Alain Resnais and I were only able to collaborate because, from the outset, we both *saw* the film in the same way; and not in the same broad outlines, but exactly, in the way it would be built up as well as in the details of its construction. What I wrote might have been something he was already thinking, and what he added during shooting I might have written.

It is necessary to stress this point, since this kind of complete agreement is something rather unusual. But it was just this shared understanding which accounted for our decision to work together; or rather to work on a common project, since, paradoxically, we almost always in practice worked apart from each other.

At the outset, we were brought together as a result of the initiative of the film producers. One day last winter Pierre Courau and Raymond Froment approached me to ask if I would like to meet Resnais, with the eventual idea of writing for him. I already knew his work, admiring in it an extremely firm and studied composition, with something uncompromising about it. I felt that it shared some of my own efforts towards a

slightly ritualistic weight, a certain deliberation and a sense of “theatre”, and on occasion those fixed attitudes, that firmness of gesture, word and decor, which make one think at the same time both of a piece of sculpture and of an opera. Finally, I found in it an endeavour to construct space and time in purely mental terms—those of dream, perhaps, or of memory, those of affective life—without over-much concern for the traditional links of cause and effect or for a rigid time-scheme for the narrative.

One knows how the old-fashioned cinema likes to develop its plots along straight lines, never letting us slip a link in an all too predictable chain of events: the telephone rings, the man picks it up, we see the caller at the other end of the wire, the man answers that he's on his way, he hangs up, opens the door, goes down the stairs, gets into his car, drives along the streets, pulls up in front of a door, climbs the stairs, presses the bell, a maid opens the door . . . etc., etc. But our temperament in fact moves more quickly—or on occasion more slowly. Its gait is more varied, more rich and less reassuring: it jumps certain passages, it preserves an exact record of trivial details, it repeats and doubles back on itself. And this mental time, with its mysteries, its gaps, its obsessions, its obscure areas, is the one that interests us, since it is the tempo of our emotions, of our *life*.

These were the things Resnais and I discussed at our first meeting. A week later I put four script projects up to him, and he expressed interest in all four as well as in two of my published novels. After further conversation, we decided to begin with *L'Année Dernière à Marienbad*.

By myself, I then sat down to write not a “narrative” but a direct *découpage* (shooting script), that is to say a shot by shot description of the film as I saw it in my mind, with dialogue and sound. Resnais came at regular intervals to look at the text and check that everything was going as planned. Once the writing had been finished we had a second series of long discussions, confirming our agreement. Resnais had such a clear idea of what I was after that the few alterations he suggested (at points here and there in the dialogue, for instance) were virtually amplifications of my own meaning and intention.

The actual shooting went in the same way: Resnais, now, worked alone—that is to say, with the actors, with the cameraman, Sacha Vierny, but without me. I never actually set foot on the set, since I was at Brest and later in Turkey while they were shooting in Bavaria and afterwards at the Paris studio. Resnais told me, though, of the strange atmosphere of those weeks, filming in the cold palace of Nymphenburg, in the park at Schleissheim, and of the way in which Giorgio Albertazzi, Delphine Seyrig and Sacha Pitoëff gradually began to identify with these three characters of ours who had no names, no past, no links between themselves except those created through their own gestures and voices, their presence and their imagination.

When I finally saw the film, after my return to France, it was already at the rough-cut stage, quite close to achieving its final form; and it was very much as I had envisaged it. Resnais had adhered as nearly as possible to the set-ups and camera movements of my shooting script, not as a matter of principle but because we both saw them in the same way; and his necessary modifications were in line with this understanding. Naturally, though, he had done a great deal more than respect my intentions: he had realised them, given the whole thing existence, weight, the power of imposing itself on the imagination of an audience. And I realised then all that he had put in himself (although he repeatedly insisted that he had only “simplified”), everything which had not been mentioned in the script and which he had had to invent, shot by shot, to produce the strongest and most compelling effect.

All that remained was for me to complete some linking passages in the text while Henri Colpi put the finishing touches to the editing. And, now, ought I perhaps to mention one or two moments, out of the whole film, where perhaps . . .

Here a caress which I saw as rather less explicit, there a wild scene which could be a little more spectacular. But these are minute points; and our intention, finally, is to sign the film jointly, without separating scenario and direction in the credits.

But wasn't the anecdote itself already a sort of *mise en scène* of the real? Only a brief synopsis is needed to appreciate the impossibility of using this subject as basis for a film in the traditional form, a straightforward story full of developments "logically" linked. The entire film is, in effect, the story of a conviction: it has to do with a reality which its hero creates out of his own words and vision. And if this obstinate, secret conviction finally prevails, it is after a perfect maze of false trails and detours, checks and doubling back.

The setting is a big hotel, a sort of international palace, huge, baroque, opulent but icy in its decor: a world of marble and stucco, columns, mouldings, gilded ceilings, statues; a world of servants frozen stiffly in their places. The guests, anonymous, civilised, unmistakably rich and idle, seriously but dispassionately observe the rules of the games they play

(cards, dominoes), of the dances they dance, the chit-chat they engage in, of their pistol-shooting excursions. Within this shuttered and stifling world, men and objects alike seem victims of some kind of spell, as in those dreams which develop such a sense of inevitability that it would be as useless to attempt to change their smallest detail as it would be to try to run away.

A stranger wanders from one room to another—among the formal crowds, across deserted salons—opens doors, bumps up against his reflection in mirrors, traverses interminable corridors. His ear picks up shreds of phrases, chance words from overheard conversations. His eye moves from one anonymous face to another. But it returns continuously to the face of a young woman, a beautiful prisoner who has not yet perhaps been destroyed by this gilded cage. And he offers her the impossible—the thing which seems most impossible in this timeless labyrinth. He offers her a past, a future and freedom. He tells her that they met before, a year ago, that they were in love, that he has now come to a rendezvous arranged by herself, that his purpose is to take her away with him.

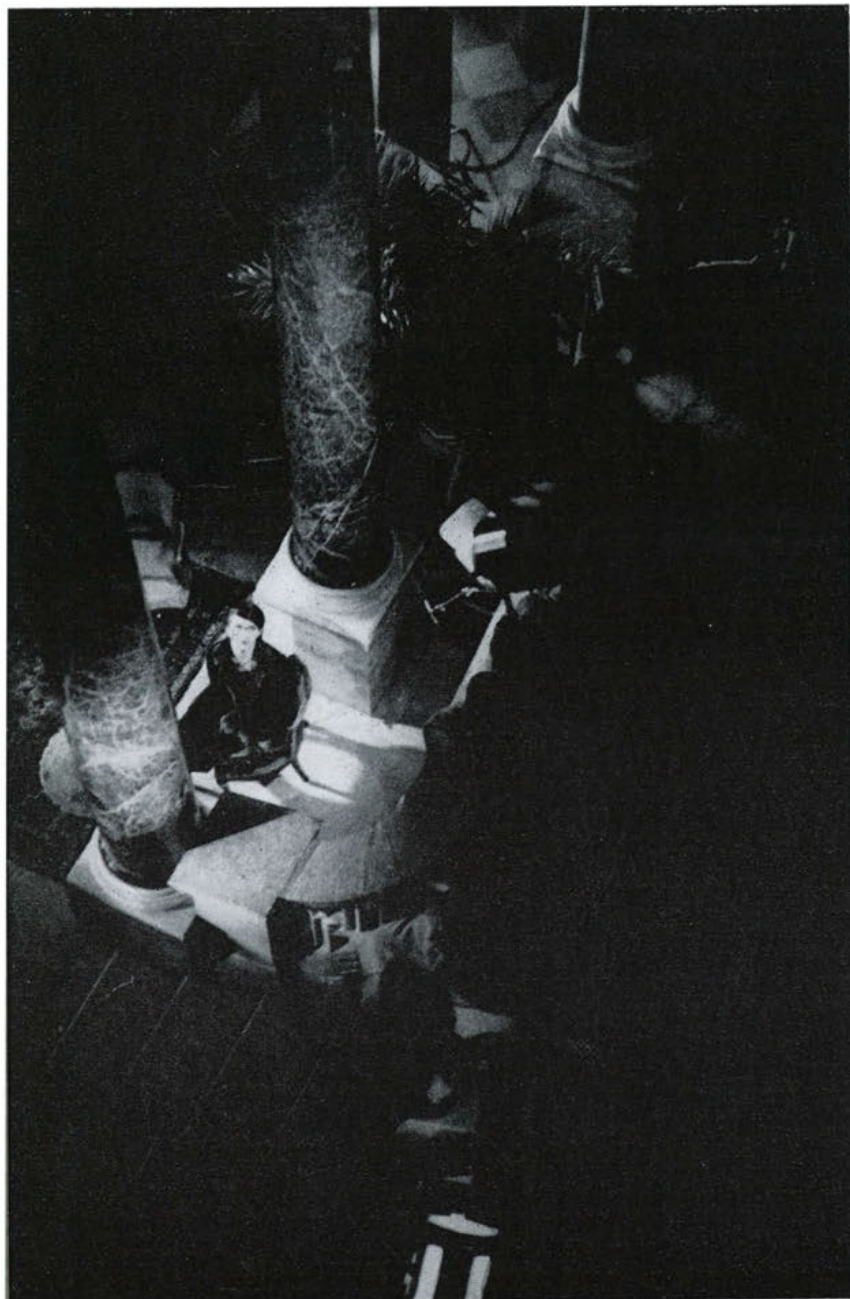
Is the stranger a commonplace seducer? Is he a madman? Is he simply confusing the woman's face with another? The girl, at any event, begins by treating the thing as a game, a game like any other, something intended only to amuse. But the man is not laughing. Stubborn, grave, convinced of this past encounter whose history he gradually develops, he is insistent, he offers proofs. And the girl, gradually, reluctantly, gives ground. Then she becomes frightened; she hardens herself, she does not want to leave this artificial but comforting world of hers, the world she is used to and which is personified for her by another man, tender, distant and disillusioned, who watches over her and who is perhaps her husband. But the story the stranger tells her becomes irresistibly more real, more coherent, more actual, more true. Past and present, besides, have finally become intermingled, whilst the mounting tension between the three protagonists arouses in the mind of the heroine fantasies of tragedy: of rape, murder and suicide.

Then, suddenly, she is ready to yield. She has already, in fact, made her surrender. After a last effort at escape, a final chance offered to her guardian to win her back, she seems to accept the identity the stranger offers her, to agree to go with him towards something—something unnamed, something different. Towards love, poetry, freedom; or maybe towards death.

Each of these characters is nameless and they were identified in the script by single initials, used simply for convenience. The man who may be the husband (Sacha Pitoëff) was designated by an M, the heroine (Delphine Seyrig) by an A, and the unknown, naturally, by an X. We know absolutely nothing about them or about their lives. They are nothing beyond what we see them to be: guests in a big hotel, cut off from the outside world and in its own way a prison. What do they do when they're somewhere else? One is tempted to answer—nothing. Elsewhere, they have no existence. As for the past which the hero forcibly introduces into this closed vacuum of a world, one has the impression that he is making it up here and now, as he goes along. There was no last year and Marienbad is no longer to be found on any map. This past, too, has no reality outside the moment when it is evoked with sufficient force; and when it finally triumphs it has quite simply become the present, as if it had always been so.

* * *

Certainly the cinema is a pre-ordained medium for this kind of narrative. The essential characteristic of the screen image is its actuality. While literature has at its disposal a whole range of tenses, making it possible to situate one event in



Filming "L'Année Dernière à Marienbad":
Delphine Seyrig is framed between marble
pillars as Resnais lines up a shot.

relation to another, one can say that on the screen the verb is always in the present tense. (This accounts for the weird artificiality of those "narrated films", told for publication, which have been put back into the past tense so dear to the classical novel.) By its very nature, what we see on the screen is *in the act of happening*: we are given the action itself, not an account of it.

All the same, the most slow-witted among the audience easily makes allowance for the flashback. A few seconds of action a little out of focus are signal enough that the film is moving towards memory: he understands that from now on he'll be watching some past action, and the clear, sharp focus can then be resumed for the rest of the sequence, without anyone feeling worried by images which are really indistinguishable from the present action, images which are in fact of the present.

Having admitted memory, it's equally simple to allow in the merely imaginary. No one complains, for instance, when in the courtroom scene in a thriller we *see* a hypothetical version of the circumstances of the crime (a false hypothesis, too) made mentally or verbally by the magistrate; and then, in exactly the same way, the film *shows* us the testimony given by the different witnesses, fragments of scenes, all more or less contradictory and more or less true, but all presented on the screen in images of identical clarity, realism, actuality and objectivity . . .

What do all these images amount to? They are bits of imagination; and imagination, if it's vivid enough, is always in the present tense. The memories one "re-see", the distant places, the future meetings, the episodes from the past which everyone carries in his head, re-arranging their development as time passes—these make up a kind of film which keeps running continually in our minds, whenever we stop paying attention to what is actually happening around us. At other times, we're recording through all our senses an external world by which we're fairly and squarely surrounded. So the complete film as it runs through our minds allows simultaneously for fragments of actual experience, things seen and heard at the moment, and for fragments belonging to the past, the future, the remote distance, or entirely to fantasy.

What happens when two people meet and exchange ideas? Take this little dialogue . . .

"What if we both went to the beach? A wide, empty beach where we could be warm in the sun . . ."

"With the weather the way it is! We'd spend the whole day indoors, waiting for the rain to stop."

"Then we could make a wood fire in the big fireplace . . ."

etc.

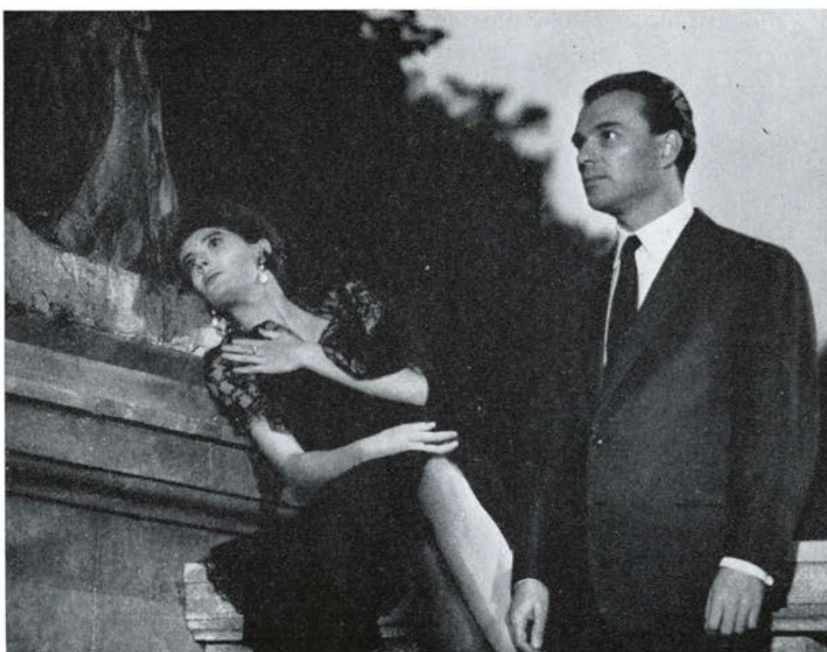
The actual room or street where they're talking will have gone from their minds, replaced by the images they're suggesting to each other. It really is an *exchange of views* between them: the long stretch of sand, the rain trickling down the windows, the glancing flames. And the spectator in the cinema would undoubtedly be prepared to see neither street nor room, but in its place, and while listening to the dialogue, to see the couple stretched out in the sun on a beach, then as the rain begins to see them taking shelter in a house, then to see one of them beginning to stack the logs in a big country fireplace . . .

In this context, one can get an idea of what the images in *L'Année Dernière à Marienbad* might be, since this is essentially the record of a communication between two people, a man and a woman, one of them putting suggestions and the other resisting, until they end in agreement, as if this was how it had always been.

The cinema audience, then, seemed to us largely prepared for this kind of film, through its acceptance of such devices as the flashback. It might be said, though, that the spectator is



likely to lose his footing if he isn't from time to time given "explanations" which will let him place each scene chronologically and according to its degree of objective reality. But we've decided to trust the spectator and to leave him from start to finish with subjective images only. Two attitudes then become possible. He can try to reconstruct some "Cartesian" scheme of things, as rational and straightforward as he can make it; and he will undoubtedly find the film difficult, and quite possibly incomprehensible. Or he can let himself be carried along by the remarkable images in front of him, by the actors' voices, by the sounds, the music, the rhythm of the cutting, by the hero's passion . . . and if he does this the film will seem as easy as anything he has seen: a film which addresses itself directly to his sensibility, to his faculties of looking, listening, responding and allowing himself to be moved. The story it tells will seem to him more realistic, more true, will correspond more closely to his ordinary life as he feels it, from the moment he agrees to get rid of all those preconceived ideas, psychological analyses, more or less vulgar schemes of interpretation, which bad novels and bad films repeat to him *ad nauseam*, and which are themselves the worst of abstractions.



Above and right: Delphine Seyrig and Giorgio Albertazzi, heroine and stranger in "*L'Année Dernière à Marienbad*".



one two three

. . .



ABOVE : Frank Capra rehearses a scene for *Pocketful of Miracles* with Bette Davis.

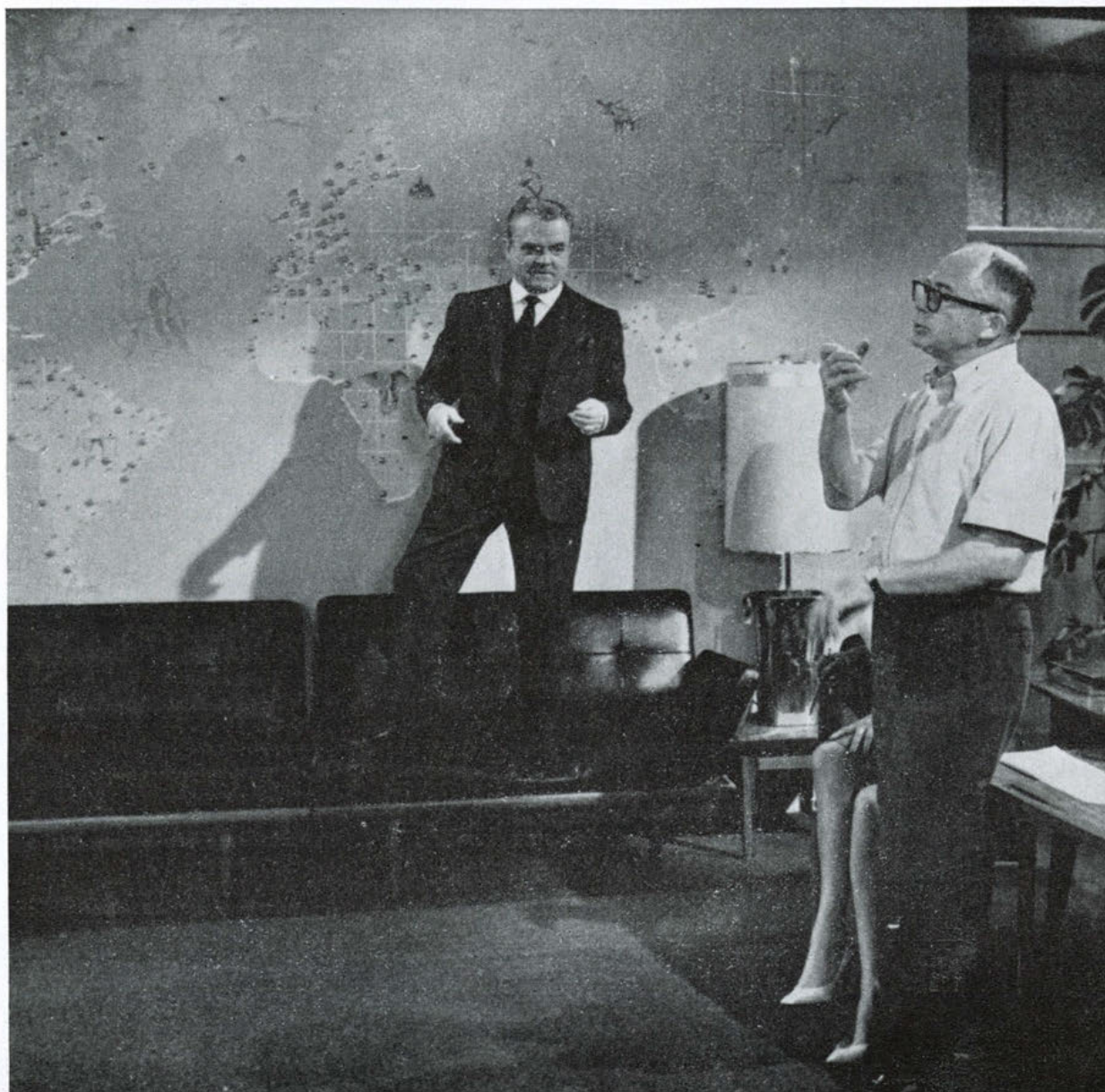
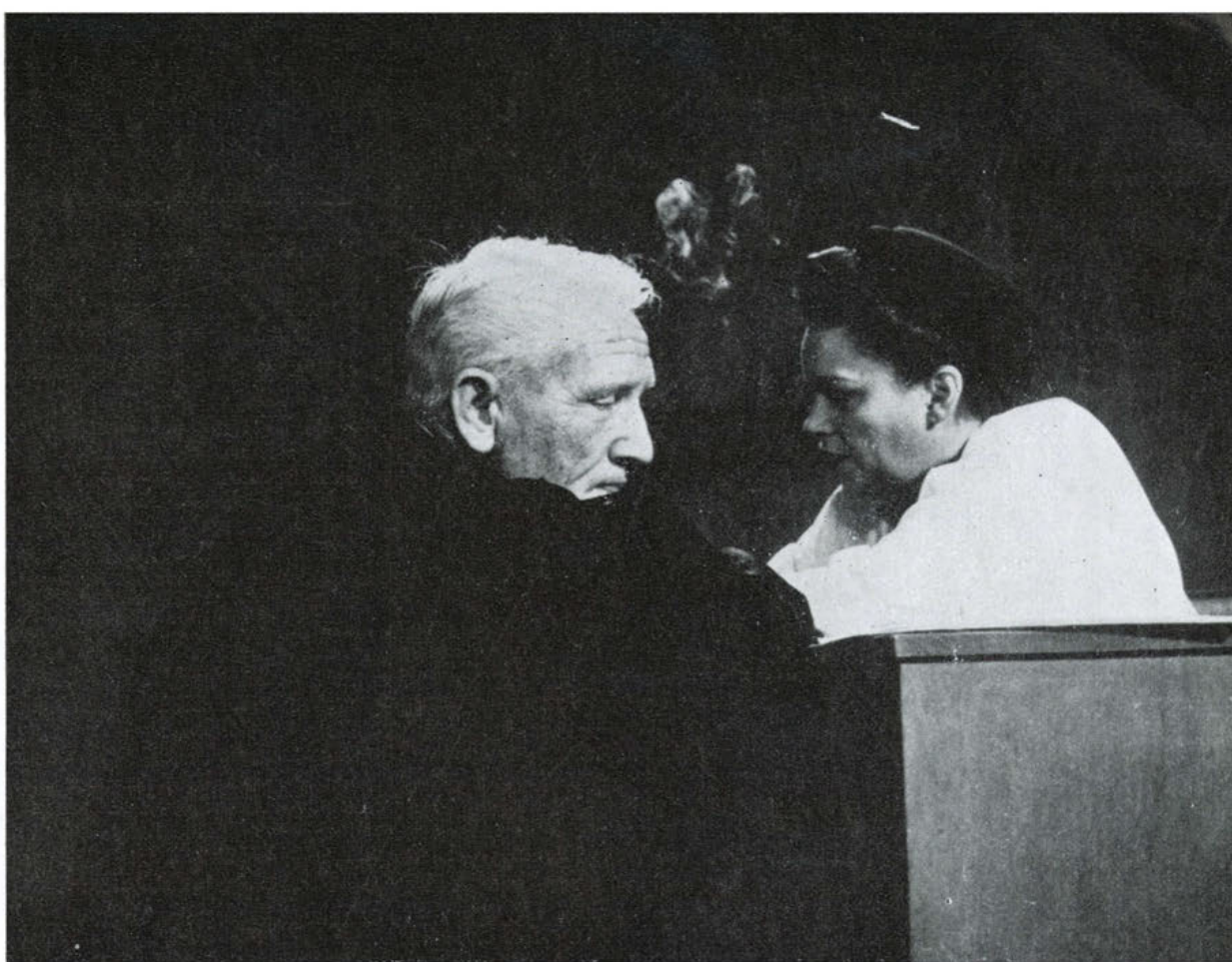
LEFT: Bette Davis and Capra on the *Pocketful of Miracles* set.

ABOVE: Spencer Tracy and Judy Garland in *Judgment at Nuremberg*.

RIGHT: James Cagney and Billy Wilder on the set of *One, Two, Three*.

"IF THE CINEMA is to go in for the unembarrassed use of the smile between the tears, it seems to me much better to drop all pretence and shoot the works." This contemporary comment on Frank Capra's *Lady for a Day* (1933), the story of old Apple Annie and her fling in high society, looks like applying equally to the remake, *Pocketful of Miracles*, which Capra has just completed. With Bette Davis in May Robson's old part, Glenn Ford and Hope Lange in support, and Damon Runyon's original to work on again, Capra's Depression comedy is being refurbished in style.

Another veteran, Billy Wilder, has gone back to Germany for a romantic comedy, *One, Two, Three*, adapted from a play by Ferenc Molnar. A story of East and West Germany, with the Brandenburg Gate (reconstructed for the occasion in Munich) as its focal point, the film stars James Cagney, here working with Wilder for the first time, Horst Buchholz and Arlene Francis. Also in Germany, Stanley Kramer has assembled the kind of all-star cast Hollywood used to be able to call on for his *Judgment at Nuremberg*. Spencer Tracy, Montgomery Clift, Richard Widmark, Maximilian Schell, Marlene Dietrich and Judy Garland are all involved, as prosecutors, defence counsel and witnesses, in this reconstruction of the Nuremberg Trials.





LA CROSSE, WISCONSIN; population about 50,000; birthplace of Nicholas Ray and Joseph Losey. As an entry for a cineaste's guide-book, this one must take a little beating. Add that they both went, if not quite simultaneously, to the same school (Losey was born in January, 1909; Ray in August, 1911) and this is only the second link in the careers of two film-makers whom chance, and later the critics, seem determined to bracket together.

Ray was thirty-six when he made his first feature, *They Live By Night*; Losey, at thirty-nine, followed him with *The Boy with Green Hair*. Both pictures were made for R.K.O.; but coincidence doesn't enter into it here, since this was the time when Dore Schary was strenuously reminding R.K.O. that it was, after all, the studio that had let Welles make *Citizen Kane*. Both men arrived at the cinema via theatre and radio, Losey in particular having pursued a pyrotechnic course through the theatre of the Thirties. He was writing book and theatre reviews in his early twenties, worked on some of the first stage shows at Radio City Music Hall, and after a tour of Scandinavia and Russia came back in 1936 to put on the celebrated *Living Newspaper* production, in which Nicholas Ray acted. He edged his way towards the cinema by way of a marionette film sponsored by the petroleum industry for the New York World Fair, followed by several educational shorts. In 1942 he was working in radio; in 1945, after military service, he made an Oscar-winning short in M-G-M's *Crime Doesn't Pay* series. Then came the famous Hollywood production of Brecht's *Galileo*, with Charles Laughton. Of his work with Brecht, Losey has been quoted as saying: "My own exper-

Conversations with Nicholas Ray & Joseph Losey

by PENELOPE HOUSTON and JOHN GILLET



ience was that he didn't follow his own theories too rigidly. When dealing with actors, for instance, he used whatever means produced the best results. If the Stanislavsky method worked, that was fine; but he was always ready to try other approaches."

Nicholas Ray, meanwhile, had been a slower starter in the theatre, though a precociously successful radio script, at the age of sixteen, had won him a scholarship to study under Frank Lloyd Wright. In the theatre he worked with the producer John Houseman, went with him to the Office of War Information, and in the early Forties was engaged on propaganda radio programmes. In 1943 he directed *Lute Song* on Broadway, with Yul Brynner and Mary Martin; in 1946 *Beggar's Song*, with Alfred Drake. Sandwiched between, however, had been a trip to Hollywood as assistant to Kazan on *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*. He arrived in Hollywood as a feature director in 1947, shooting *They Live By Night* in a brisk seven weeks. The producer was his old associate John Houseman, who was also one of the men behind the production of *Galileo*.

Ray made fourteen Hollywood films in ten years, working for most of the major companies. He came to Europe in 1957 for *Bitter Victory*, went back again for *Wind Across the Everglades* and *Party Girl*, then returned to Europe to make

Above: Nicholas Ray on the set of "King of Kings". Left: Joseph Losey stages a fight scene for "The Gypsy and the Gentleman".

The Savage Innocents (shot at Pinewood and elsewhere) and *King of Kings* (shot in Spain). Losey's career, meanwhile, had been abruptly checked after five American pictures. He was in Italy, working on a co-production variously known as *Stranger on the Prowl* and *Encounter*, when he learnt that he had been called before the Un-American Activities Committee. Threatened with blacklisting in Hollywood, he settled in England but at first could take no credit for the films he made here. *The Sleeping Tiger* and *The Intimate Stranger* were both made under pseudonyms. *Time Without Pity* (1956) broke the enforced silence; since then Losey has made four more British films, all correctly credited.

Including pictures to be released later this autumn, Ray has now directed nineteen features and Losey thirteen. Both scored the same kind of critical success early on (Ray with *They Live By Night*, Losey with *The Dividing Line*); both then lost some ground with the critics, though Ray made a spectacular come-back with *Rebel Without a Cause*; and both now find themselves labelled as cult directors, a distinction hard to win and even harder to shake off. *Cahiers du Cinéma*, which has long admired Ray, caught up with Losey only last year. The lead has been quickly followed, in Britain and elsewhere. M. Hoveyda says that *Party Girl* gives him "a glimpse of the kingdom of heaven"; Losey has been compared, for reasons not immediately apparent, to Klee and Stravinsky. The game of critical cross-references is in full cry. Adulation can scarcely go further than the case of one over-eager French journalist, who contrived to publish an interview with Ray, without actually meeting him, in which he generously ascribed to his hero many of his own opinions.

Something less than enthusiasm for the Ray-Losey cult, however, does not imply lack of interest in the film-makers themselves. We hope, at least, that we managed to communicate this to both Nicholas Ray and Joseph Losey, when a group of us were able to talk with them, separately and at length, last August. The interviews published here are based on these conversations.

NICHOLAS RAY

NICHOLAS RAY IS TALL, EAGER, COMMUNICATIVE, AN IMPROBABLY young-looking fifty. He speaks slowly, as though he were chipping his sentences off some rough block of ideas, knocking his thoughts into shape as he goes. Talking about his own work, he is self-critical, absorbed; he is concerned about what people think, concerned especially about clarity, the way an idea communicates itself on the screen. Looking back recently at his early films, shown *en bloc* a few months ago in Paris, he said he was disconcerted to find how often he repeated himself, took pains to emphasise a point already clearly enough made. Talking to him, one feels the same pressure towards lucidity, together with an undiminished fascination with the mechanics and possibilities of his craft. His image of the cinema—"the biggest, most expensive electric train anyone could be given to play with"—is a young enthusiast's.

As a film-maker with rather more experience than most of critical snakes and ladders, Ray might be expected to be interested in what—or how—critics think. Clearly he is; and equally clearly he finds the existing critic-director relationship rather less than ideal. He would like greater definition of terms, would like the critic to set out the standards he applies in evaluating a film, then to meet the director on the ground of a specific picture which could be analysed by critic and director according to their separate lights. This would be a fascinating laboratory exercise, and one hopes it can be realised. A critic's possible answer—that he knows what he's looking for on the screen when he finds it—is not as evasive as

it might appear. Critical "standards" are set up to be knocked down by film-makers demanding new responses. But Ray is right in pressing towards a firmer, sharper definition of terms.

He's disturbed, in fact, by simple ignorance, the failure of so many reviewers to know basic technical facts of the thing they're writing about. One of us mentioned a reviewer's reference to "slow cuts" as a case in point: we knew what was meant, but the way it was put revealed depths of disinterest. Talking of the French critics, Ray readily concedes that some of his admirers are "pretty far out" in their wilder judgments. It was disconcerting, he said, to resee one of his own films, to point out where he felt he had gone wrong, and to hear all around the murmurs of *formidable*, *merveilleux* from an audience which would not admit the possibility of error. At the same time, he feels, the young French critics *do* know more. "They make it their business to know." And they have proved their point in action: one test of a critic is the sort of films he makes when he stops being a critic.

Generally speaking, Ray clearly feels that critics are too resistant to innovation. (How many of us, for instance, would hold now to the opinions we first expressed about CinemaScope?) Screens, he says, had to get bigger; and he regards *How the West Was Won*, the first story film in Cinerama, as a test case, and perhaps also a test for the critics. Are we prejudiced, he asks, against size itself? We try to assure him, not perhaps successfully, that if very big films usually get unenthusiastic reviews it's not because of a critical resistance movement but because they impose problems few film-makers have proved equipped to tackle. Ray himself likes to work in CinemaScope, though not always. Pointing across to the high trees of Green Park, he commented that a story set there should never make a CinemaScope subject. He's also deeply interested in colour, and the cinema's failure to explore it imaginatively, to know how and what to select. He felt, he said, that the black-and-white 35mm. picture had more or less had its day, then saw Jean-Luc Godard's *Breathless* and slightly revised his opinion.

He also liked Godard's Berlin Festival film *Une Femme est une Femme*: "It's really inventive; it's got some bounce." Not surprising, perhaps, that Ray should enjoy Godard's work, or that he should prefer Fellini's talent as a film-maker to Antonioni's, while willingly conceding his respect for Antonioni's quality of mind. *L'Avventura* he finds attenuated and fragile; *La Dolce Vita* he admires, though thinking the whole Steiner episode, from organ playing to suicide, much



"Rebel Without a Cause": James Dean and Ann Doran.



Ward Bond, Robert Ryan and Frank Ferguson in a scene from "On Dangerous Ground".

too predictable. He sees, he says, too few films—an almost universal complaint among film-makers. But his admirations are firmly positive: Buñuel, Jean Renoir, Bergman, and, from Hollywood, Billy Wilder.

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Ray's capacity for self-criticism and appraisal goes well beyond anything usually encountered among directors. His best film, he feels, is *Rebel Without a Cause* (most of us would probably agree); he has solid affection for *The Lusty Men*, a story about rodeo people, starring Robert Mitchum and Susan Hayward, which has hardly been revived since its first appearance in 1952, and a reminiscent interest, slightly tinged with scepticism, about *In a Lonely Place*, his Hollywood murder story. Of his first film, *They Live by Night*, he said that he suddenly thought about it again a year or so ago, walking down a dark, draughty corridor in a house in Maine, and wished that he'd been able to manage "just one more angle in the car scene." Otherwise, he felt it got about as close as could be expected to what he wanted it to express. He's also satisfied with *Bigger than Life*, with one major reservation. This was the story of a man who reached the edge of insanity after taking cortisone; and Ray argues that he made a bad mistake in actually naming the drug, involving his audience in the pros and cons of one particular medical discussion, rather than letting the miracle drug theme carry his point about the fallacy of believing in any magical solution to a human problem.

All these films have an element of violence, and there's no doubt that violence fascinates Ray as the unpredictable factor in human personality. He's equally concerned, though, with the precise placing of a story, its degree of documentary truth. The rodeo world of *The Lusty Men*; the intelligent suburbia of *Bigger than Life*; the Eskimo settlement of *The Savage Innocents*; the gypsy life of *Hot Blood*: these several settings he sees as a series of explorations. One of his early films, *On Dangerous Ground* (1950, with Robert Ryan and Ida Lupino), was a not very successful attempt to link two kinds of violence—the brutality of the hard city cop, confronted with the raw winter countryside which was the scene of murder. Some moments in cars (Ray, like Antonioni, has an eye for a car scene) and some snow-and-ice landscapes were about all we,

or Ray, felt like recalling from the film. But he emphasised that he had driven out with police squad cars in the toughest district of Boston for weeks before making it, just as he studied endless photographs of gypsy ceremonial before embarking on *Hot Blood*.

Ray is absorbed by fact, details of the way people conduct themselves, as the anecdotes he tells reveal. While making a Western, *Run for Cover* (1955, with James Cagney), he wanted to get away from the standard Indian scenes. "What do they do," he says, "when they're not being Indians?" He devised a game, a sort of polo played with a hat instead of a ball; but the episode, characteristically, was cut before the film reached the public. Of Cagney, intriguingly, he said that he tried "to bring out a kind of serenity in his personality." Among the actors he has directed, he cited James Dean as one of the most stimulating to work with.

With Dean he was able freely to improvise, something he regards as an essential element in his style. He quoted the quarrel scene in *Rebel Without a Cause*, when the boy comes home after the chicken run. The sequence was causing trouble, and Ray one evening asked James Dean to come to his house and work on it there. He himself would play the father; and he stationed himself before a television set, switched to a blank screen, so that he could watch Dean unobtrusively as he roamed around, snatched up a bottle of milk from the refrigerator, thought himself slowly into the situation. When the scene was right, in Dean's and the director's understanding of it, he got the set designer to come over to his house so that the living-room set could be replanned on the lines of his own room. The point, essentially, was the working out of a mood in terms of a particular setting.

* * *

Twenty-five per cent. of his work is probably as much as the average film-maker (certainly the average Hollywood film-maker) expects to be able wholly to endorse. Ray now has as much independence as most directors. But he's had in the past the usual experiences of making films not from choice but necessity, to work out a contract or get a friend "off the hook". His second film, *A Woman's Secret* (1948, from a Vicki Baum novel) was made, he implies, because Dore Schary caught him when his resistance was low and his spirits high after a holiday. He expected little from this, or from *Flying Leathernecks* (1951, John Wayne as a tough air force pilot) or *Born to be Bad* (1950, Joan Fontaine as a tough girl on the make). He talks, as not all directors are ready to do, of the strain of gearing yourself up to a day's work on a project you suspect from the start to be hopelessly wrong.

In other cases, the project had its possibilities, or the dissatisfactions came at a later stage. *Johnny Guitar* (1954), in which Joan Crawford plays Vienna, the saloon owner who sits at her grand piano, dazzling in a white evening dress, while she waits for the lynching party, amuses him in recollection. It was "baroque—very baroque." If you're filming anything as bizarre as this story, of rivalry between Crawford and Mercedes McCambridge (her performance as leader of the posse, he admiringly says, was "straight sulphuric acid"), then there's no point in going less than all out. Much more seriously, Ray regards both *Bitter Victory* (1957, Curd Jurgens and Richard Burton in the desert war) and *The Savage Innocents* (1960) as flawed films; ambitious undertakings whose themes somehow became muffled in the making.

The problems of *Savage Innocents* were the kind likely to crop up in co-productions, particularly when the subject is as tricky to cast as this one. Ray did not want his Eskimos to be noble savages, conversing in pidgin English. But somehow, as the film developed, his more fluent, literary dialogue was sacrificed. He regrets, too, that the version seen internationally had to be the one originally cut for the Italian market. The score had an Italian flavour; the jokes were a bit broader than they need be, to meet the Italian sense of humour; there was rather more emphasis on blood and slaughter in the cutting.

He wasn't attempting a second *Nanook*, which wasn't in any case practicable, but a film which would make a particular moral point. The Eskimo and the mountie, he says, have established a human contact; but this, when it comes to the test, is not enough. The gap between cultures and civilisations cannot be jumped by good will alone.

This, at least, was the intention; and Ray feels the film blurs it, that there's a failure in clarity. Back one comes, in fact, to clarity, and his concern with it. One particular project, which Nicholas Ray first mentioned to me four years ago and which remains unfilmed, seems to sum up a lot about him. It was to be a story called *Passport*, about an American whose passport is stolen, and who finds that the loss of a piece of paper is also a loss of identity. Searching for it, he would come one day upon a thief: a child, sitting by the sea, tearing up the passport pages and throwing them into the water. The child's question: "Where does the tide become national?" It's the sort of question, one feels, which Ray feels a need to keep asking, in however many different forms he puts it.

JOSEPH LOSEY

CONVERSATION WITH JOSEPH LOSEY IS RESTLESS, STIMULATING, abrupt. We lead him off the track, he leads us off; one anecdote sparks another, unrelated and probably off the record; he counters a question with another question; he twists in his chair as he develops a point, then relaxes and smiles widely. Deeply concerned about problems of communication, he has no difficulty in establishing an immediate, personal contact with the people he's talking to. On the screen, one imagines, he finds communication as such not much more difficult, though he repeatedly stresses its fundamental importance. Talking of Resnais' *L'Année Dernière à Marienbad*, which he has recently seen, he emphasises its technical mastery but is convinced that it will be all but incomprehensible to most audiences. And he



A scene from "The Dividing Line".

clearly finds it a little shocking that a film-maker should spend this kind of money on anything so indulgent. At the same time, he asserts, audiences are probably rather ahead of distributors in their appreciation and understanding. This need to get a point across to an audience is a recurring theme. Of *The Criminal*, he says that his primary purpose was to bring home something about prison conditions to the general public; and he measures the film's success partly in these terms.

More has been written about *The Criminal* than about any other film he has made; and most of the comments he regards as really perceptive come from France—this not only because the film had the bad luck in England to clash with *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, but because of the level of critical consideration. Losey was a friend of the late Richard Winnington, whom he still regards as unequalled among daily press critics. "He just had this feeling for films." He also respects Paul Dehn's enthusiasm. Shared with Ray, however, are doubts about just how much critics really know and care; and it's enthusiasm he also misses at some levels of the industry in Britain.

In Hollywood, he says, "relations between director and executive can be strained and full of misunderstandings, but even the most commercial people really do care about pictures. Over here, I sometimes get the impression that they just don't like films." He's quick to qualify this with unstinting praise for British lighting cameramen ("you have some of the best in the world") and operators, for producers such as Anthony Havelock-Allan, for individual technicians and executives. But he cites an assistant director's comment—"why kill yourself, it's only a film?"—which is clearly incomprehensible to a man whose involvement in his own work is total. "I direct everything in the films I make," he says, "including second units." On another level, he tells an anecdote of a British production executive who would not be convinced that audience tastes were moving in the direction of downbeat films. Losey quoted *Room at the Top* as an example,

Hardy Kruger and Micheline Presle in "Blind Date".

to be greeted with a surprised, "but *Room at the Top* has a happy ending."

Losey's own films, both here and in America, have mainly been made for independent producers. In America he worked very fast on *M* (20 days), *The Prowler* (17 days) and *The Dividing Line* (23 days). This, of course, was nothing out of the way by Hollywood standards and was possible because of the amount of pre-planning and rehearsal. In Britain it's more difficult to find rehearsal time and our studios are not geared to such rapid operation. In the case of *The Criminal*, for instance, he had to leave three scenes unshot because they couldn't be fitted into the schedule. In particular, a key one was to have established the character played by Jill Bennett as a drug addict, an omission which makes her first appearance in the film as it stands unintentionally bizarre.

In whatever country he's worked, Losey, like many directors, has hardly yet been in a position to film entirely on his own terms, initiating a project from scratch and developing it exactly as he wants. "A director doesn't choose his subjects," he says, "they're offered to him." But this is said without bitterness: it is one of the facts of a film-maker's life. He has planned productions which have never reached the screen—Brecht's *Gali eo*, Strindberg's *The Father*, with Wilfrid Lawson, whom he directed on the stage in *The Wooden Dish* and regards as one of our great actors. *The Wild One* and *The Four Poster* were both films he might have made had he stayed in Hollywood.

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Looking back to the Hollywood years, Losey names *The Prowler*, with its integration of decor and camera style into the narrative, as his favourite film from this period. He likes to co-operate with a production designer, someone whose function goes considerably beyond that usually taken by the art director; and, just as he has worked here with Richard Macdonald, a man who combines the unusual triple career of painter, advertising agency art director and (on Losey's British films) production designer, so on *The Prowler* his collaborator was John Hubley. *The Prowler* is a film about pressure on character, the pressure of a violent action; and so, in a different sense, is *M*. "I don't think of this as a remake of Lang's film, though I did use a couple of his ideas. I wanted the man to be more sympathetic, for one thing. The main

trouble was the establishing of this kind of subject in an American setting—I couldn't believe myself in the idea of the whole underworld ganging up against the killer." The film was so heavily cut in this country that we have never had a chance to see it as he intended.

He is not entirely satisfied now with *The Dividing Line*, on which there were casting problems, or *The Boy with Green Hair*, which he regards as a bit too sentimental. He accepts, tentatively, a criticism that it's the liberal characters and the way their attitudes are expressed which now date *The Dividing Line*, while its feeling for latent violence remains as strong as ever.

On these films Losey was working within the socially critical framework of the postwar American cinema, in a tradition allowing for a kind of mental toughness that has never been part of British film-making. On the whole, we protect our institutions. "You have the most successful class system in the world," he comments. Coming to terms with British life, to the point where he felt he could give it valid expression on the screen, would be a problem for any director of this temperament; and in Losey's case it must have been accentuated by the hole-and-corner conditions in which he had to work during his first years here. But he has never, he affirms, taken on a project he thought had nothing to offer him, and prefers television commercials to unrewarding feature work. "Though I have turned down one or two commercials as well." The efforts to re-establish himself, the breach with Hollywood, must have been accompanied by deep frustrations, though any scars are kept well hidden. Return to Hollywood is not impossible: but Losey has never been prepared to pay the price of turning informer.

To date, Losey regards *The Criminal* as by far the most successful of his British films. From *The Sleeping Tiger*, in which psychiatrist Alexander Knox became hazardously involved with Dirk Bogarde as a psychotic adolescent, he looks back with affection only to two of the love scenes between Bogarde and Alexis Smith. *The Gypsy and the Gentleman*, his solitary period film, was elaborately designed to give the effect of a series of Rowlandson prints. He took on this fanciful Regency novelette, with its wild gypsy heroine (Melina Mercouri) and story of a stolen inheritance, largely for what he thought could be done with it visually. But the film was overlaid with a sentimental score, cancelling out the much more robust visual style. *Blind Date*, again, was not a subject he would necessarily have chosen; and was in fact taken on after another and more attractive project had fallen through. A problem here was to get over the initial improbability of the plot, which all hinges on the fact that a man who discovers a corpse doesn't really look at it properly. To counteract this, Losey worked for maximum credibility in the characters and, again with Richard Macdonald, in the settings of police station and artist's studio.

Losey's picture of the police in *Blind Date* met strong opposition, and his view of prison life in *The Criminal* has been similarly challenged. "But everything I showed in the film has since been reported in the press," he insists. It was the prison scenes that really concerned him, and again he found himself accepting a subject because he was attracted by some aspects rather than by the whole. He took advice from someone he would identify only as "the head of the underworld in London" as well as from prison officials, and the film reflects the life of professional crime as he encountered it. We raised the question of his attitude to brutality, the apparent fascination with the facts and face of violence. "People who say I'm fascinated by violence are fascinated by it themselves," was the crisp retort. Someone, with Buñuel in mind, suggested that there was no real reason why an artist shouldn't build his work around an obsessive violence, and Losey pounced on the



Rita Gam (Herodias), Frank Thring (Herod) and Viveca Lindfors watch the dance of Salome. A scene from Ray's "King of Kings".



Death of a sculptress: Viveca Lindfors has just been shot from the helicopter in this scene from Losey's new film, "The Damned".

point. "De Sade, after all, produced a great deal that was psychologically and socially valuable." For his own part, however: "I hate violence. I don't consider that I exploit it on the screen. But I'll tell you of a director who does . . ." And he named an eminent American film-maker usually thought to be above such considerations. The standard criticism of his work, Losey says, is not that he enjoys violence but that he encourages overacting. "I am interested in larger-than-life characters, not overacted ones. I like to work with actors like Patrick Magee who have a really creative contribution to make."

He should be doing this on his next picture, which stars the explosive combination of Jeanne Moreau and Stanley Baker. The film is *Eva*, adapted from a James Hadley Chase story about a hack writer and a high-priced call-girl; the producers are French, and the picture is to be shot in Italy. After this, there are plans for *Holiday*, to be filmed in Greece for Carl Foreman's company, a possible collaboration with Marguerite Duras, and a version, if the production can be set up, of Alun Owen's *No Trams to Lime Street*.

The first requirement Losey makes of a film-maker is that he should have a "signature", an immediately recognisable style. His off-the-cuff list of British directors who have, have had, or could have it: Carol Reed, Alexander Mackendrick, Lindsay Anderson, Seth Holt, John Guillermin. *Saturday*

Night and Sunday Morning, for all its qualities, misses out on this point, as does *Room at the Top* ("Clayton's signature here is Signoret"). He finds the indispensable signature in *L'Avventura*, which he greatly admires, and, with reservations, in *Breathless* ("But aren't they more kids playing at film-making than kids in the film playing at life?") There's a craftsman's impatience with some of the *nouvelle vague* "innovations" which, he says, are only old tricks refurbished.

His own craftsmanship is not in doubt, however violently critics disagree about the uses to which it's put. A glance through the British and French press comments on *The Criminal* makes instructive reading. "Losey's thought has never been more lucid, nor its expression more rigorous"; this is "a style of admirable elegance, and a hard, violent, passionate style"; he creates "a pitiless world, into which only intelligence throws a sharp, dazzling, necessary light". "A phoney film it may be, but it is one for the students"; it is "all done in saw-mill style, a high-pitched buzz interrupted by shrieks"; it "never properly establishes its own level of shock and conscience." The nationalities proclaim themselves, though if anyone should be in doubt the second three quotations are British. Are these irreconcilable differences? Losey, one feels, would like to prove they are not; and the greater freedom in choice of subjects that he's now acquiring may give him the opportunity.



the high 40's

by JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR

WHO WENT TO THE PICTURES in the Forties anyway? Well, of course, everyone did. Women in turbans heading for night shifts shouldered their way in to weep, amid the sleeping soldiery, over the sufferings of Joan or Greer. Sailors on leave sat goggle-eyed, imprinting on their memories the images of Betty Grable and Alice Faye to warm the long winter evenings at Scapa Flow. Children begged to see *Gaslight* or *The Man in Grey*, were turned away from *The Body Snatchers* or *The Curse of the Cat People*, and ended up with *Bambi* or *Andy Hardy*. And, needless to say, everyone spent at least some of the time saved from dodging doodlebugs in London patiently queuing to catch the afterglow of a vanished Thirties glory in *Gone with the Wind*.

Yet, strangely enough, no one seems to remember. In an American play done recently at Theatre Workshop a scene takes place in a run-down New York movie-house; and at the

climax, when the hero of the antiquated Western they are showing rides off into the sunset, one of those attending looses the rousing cry "God bless you, Barbara Stanwyck!" Not a titter, not a sign of recognition even, from a smart and relatively youthful first night audience, and no more response at passing references to Herbert Marshall and Basil Rathbone (the hero thinks he's Sherlock Holmes, you see). Similarly, when Betty Hutton appeared earlier this year on *Sunday Night at the London Palladium*, part of her act consisted of a spirited period rendition of "Chattanooga Choo-Choo", for which, creeping behind her attendant close-harmony quartet, she put on a full Forties wig, all shaggy curls and nodding victory rolls. Appalled, it seemed, at the audience's complete mystification, she glared at them accusingly and shouted "Aw, come on, you remember these hair-styles—you're not that young!" And with a thrill of horror one realised that they didn't and they were—many of them didn't even remember Betty Hutton.

The main trouble is that the Forties have never become fashionable, or even a respectable subject for nostalgia. The first great, long-lasting generation of film critics all went back to silent days; their nights of semi-illicit pleasure spent with Pearl White or *Fantomas*, and followed by parental scoldings and the prompt dismissal of errant maids for encouraging such depravity, have gone down as the first chapter of many a lifelong romance with the cinema. Consequently, it has always been "all right" to say that of course the popular arts then had an unaffected life and gusto which has never since been recaptured, and some of the most nonsensical products of the early cinema are now studied very seriously indeed, either for their art or for their qualities as period pieces. As Constant Lambert remarked snappily of previous generations' musical vulgarities, "The dung of today becomes the pot-pourri of tomorrow."

But this retrospective regard has not been extended, as one would have imagined inevitable in the fulness of time and with the advent of critics under forty, to the popular cinema of the Thirties and Forties. Surely there must be many younger critics around today with cherished memories of fleapit afternoons during rainy wartime school holidays—the exotic delights of Dorothy Lamour as any boy's Island Love, or Jean Kent as the most ubiquitous, hedge-bobbing, cave-infesting gypsy in the business? But no, it seems not. If they have such memories, the critics of today are certainly not admitting it; and the popular heroes of fifteen or twenty years ago have gone into the dark unsung and unmourned.

One suspects, though, that the younger critics of today just do not have such memories to begin with. They seem on the whole an oddly serious-minded lot, who never set foot in the cinema before 1955 and then went only to the "best" films. Hence the disturbing fact that they are compelled to evaluate Huston on his post-*Moulin Rouge* work, without direct knowledge of *The Maltese Falcon* or even, till a recent N.F.T. season, *The Asphalt Jungle*; that the Tourneur of *The Giant of Marathon* was an exciting new discovery to *Oxford Opinion* writers who had never, it appeared, seen or even heard of *Cat People* or (since it was not shown to the "serious" critics) *Night of the Demon*; that "Sturges" these days means only one thing, John . . . And, since in the cinema almost no one remembers unless he is reminded, the sheer unavailability of Forties films may have a lot to do with this state of affairs. For the moment television has taken away from us many more films than it has given back; and somehow the particular film one wants to see always seems to have been sold to TV in America but not yet acquired for showing over here.

Even granting all this, however, the question remains: if the young film enthusiast were able now to see any Forties film

Above: Humphrey Bogart, Lauren Bacall and Dalio in Howard Hawks' "To Have and Have Not". Theme (cynic finds a cause) and immediate situation, (emergency operation by amateur) were as much in the Forties idiom as the "wolverine look" with which the publicists labelled Miss Bacall.

he wanted, would he like, or even understand, half of what he saw without a store of firsthand recollection to put him back into the picture? There is no denying that films date, like everything else, and just now the popular cinema of the Forties is somewhere in that no man's land between dung and pot-pourri, old enough to be dated but not quite old enough to be period. The very look and sound of a high Forties film (for these purposes the Forties came in with the war and went out with the New Look) are indicative. Consider the typical thriller or emotional drama. The lush, dark-hued strains of a Steiner or Rosza score, probably with aspirations towards a concerto (the "Spellbound Concerto", the "Warsaw Concerto" and other determined forays into Tchaikovsky territory provide the keynote here) would set the atmosphere over a fairly non-committal set of credits (plain lettering on a plain background and no nonsense about making them arty was the rule). Then we would start, almost inevitably, with a night scene. The hero would get innocently involved in a night-time killing and spend the rest of the film proving he didn't do it. The heroine would arrive in the gathering dusk at that mysterious house she had just inherited to be greeted by those apparently sweet, kindly relatives who are going to spend the next few weeks driving her systematically out of her mind. No matter what, provided it was at night.

This gave a chance for a lot of the low-key lighting Welles had brought to everyone's attention in *Citizen Kane* (critics were always complaining that most films were so dark they couldn't see what was happening half the time), and allowed Hollywood's German contingent to have a high old time with lamplight reflected in puddles and bushes hung with shimmering drops of moisture. If by any mischance some of the film took place by day, we would be sure to see most of what was happening from the other side of a roaring baronial fire in a monumental baronial fireplace or from inexplicably low angles designed primarily to demonstrate that the set had a ceiling. (Welles had built sets with ceilings, so everyone else had to, and if you had a ceiling you might as well let the audience know it was there.) Dialogue, as well as being almost impenetrably littered with psychiatric jargon, or so tough and oblique in a sub-Chandler fashion that one could never hope to gather more than the general drift of what was being said, was certain to be delivered at such breakneck speed that modern audiences, long habituated to Hollywood's current Listen-with-Mother approach, are soon left panting hopelessly in the rear.

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But then with popular films it has always been, for the really dedicated regular at least, not so much what they are as who is in them which counts. And here the question of dating applies with particular force. It takes a peculiarly sophisticated period sense these days to appreciate the glamour of the Forties star from cold, and for the most part their appeal remains for the younger filmgoer totally mystifying. The men—well, the men can be virtually ignored. Apart from one or two of the tough private eyes (Humphrey Bogart in the big pictures, Lloyd Nolan and Tom Conway in the series), they counted for little. Poor, weak, yielding creatures, lost in their shapeless, voluminous suits, they were trampled on by ruthless *femmes fatales* and sung at by high-powered feminine vocalists; they lent a sympathetic ear to the troubles of spectacularly harassed wives fresh from discovering radium or capturing a German regiment single-handed, psychoanalysed semi-deranged heiresses, and at best took a sneaky revenge on womankind by hiding behind toothbrush moustaches and knifing shopgirls by the dozen. (Would *Les Bonnes Femmes*, one wonders, have been taken so seriously if its critics had recalled how often Audrey Totter or Evelyn Keyes in just the

same situation suffered just the same fate at the hands of Zachary Scott or some smooth and almost indistinguishable substitute?) It would take a real connoisseur nowadays to distinguish any one of two dozen eager, willowy, fresh-faced juveniles from the other twenty-three; and if today no one really even wants particularly to tell Richard Ney apart from Jeffrey Lynn, or John Agar from the pre-Method Glenn Ford, who could wholly blame him?

The women, however, are a very different matter. The Forties were a woman's world if ever there was one: the real men might be off at the war, but women were guarding the Home Front and in the front line were to be found all the great survivors, led of course by the indomitable trio of Bette, Barbara and Joan. When it came to an all-out woman's picture none of the relative newcomers could better them, and only Greer Garson managed a look-in, largely by inventing her own genre and suffering in the cause of humanity instead of merely love or money. (Really hardened filmgoers thought she was a bit soft, but at least you had to admit she was a real lady.) Instead, the new stars fell smartly, though with a little overlapping, into three groups: they were bright, good-chap-type girls, ready to do their bit and keep cheery while doing it, despatch the odd spy when need arose and keep their powder dry; or they were slinky, sluttish and dangerous to know; or they were weak-willed nitwits just asking to be driven screaming into the nearest quicksand and to be fished out in the nick of time by some hitherto ineffectual male.

The last sort wasn't very exciting and no star wanted to get stuck indefinitely with it. Joan Fontaine nearly did after *Rebecca* and *Suspicion*, but Merle Oberon managed with consummate ease to switch from cringing in *Dark Waters* to commanding in *A Song to Remember* ("Stop that Polonaise jangle, Frederick, and get on with your breakfast"), and Olivia de Havilland got the best of both worlds in *The Dark Mirror* by playing twin sisters, one an amiable ninny and the other a homicidal maniac. On the other hand, hardly anyone managed to double good chap and sleazy temptress (except the divine Stanwyck, who actually did it in the same year with *The Lady Eve* and *Double Indemnity*): you were either one thing or the other.

There were any number of temptresses, including some survivors—who can forget Joan Bennett ordering Edward G. Robinson to paint her toenails in *Scarlet Street*? But for me



Porter Hall, Betty Hutton and Eddie Bracken in Preston Sturges' "The Miracle of Morgan's Creek".



The glossy tradition tinged with high ideals: Greer Garson and Walter Pidgeon in "Madame Curie".

the classic instance of the true Forties vamp has always been Veronica Lake. Ah, the tension which would build up in a film as one waited for the invitation in that strangely husky voice, in the provocative swing of the sequinned box shoulder, to reach its consummation at a moment of climactic abandon when the face-obscuring mane of blonde hair would be swept aside in an embrace and reveal the full glory of the large, lustrous eyes, the slightly sunken cheeks and thin, heavily made-up lips which marked the apogee of Forties glamour. (The slightly haggard, even wizened look of the Forties glamour queen in her heyday may to some extent explain why few of them have aged gracefully on screen.) Poor Veronica Lake; she was never so exciting once her hair had been reduced to more normal proportions and one could see her whole face at one fell swoop.

On the other hand, the Forties hep-chick, with her younger sister the bobby-soxer, was invariably the picture of chubby, bouncing good health, from the perky bow surmounting her blonde curls to the discreetly lacquered toe-nail which emerged alluringly from the toe of her peep-toed court shoes. (Worn with everything, but especially with bare-midriff beachwear for pin-ups, these shoes were designed with a curiously abrupt instep which made the occupier in action look as if she was walking with extrovert assurance down a particularly steep hill.) She put over sex, of course, but only in the freshest, most no-nonsense way; she would be a good sport on a picnic, but she was essentially the sort of girl you could take home to mother; and her chief erotic attractions, those long and well-turned legs, were clearly meant to be used as well as admired—she could, if necessary, walk home. You knew perfectly well that if Betty Grable got stranded in the wilds, before you could say Beautiful-Blonde-From-Bashful-Bend she would be running up costumes for the rest of the kids who had to put on that show in the barn to impress the big Broadway producer; that if Deanna Durbin said she'd seen a murder she'd seen it, and, being the practical type, would prove it before the picture was out—to music if possible. Like the originator of the concept, Anne Sheridan, they had "oomph", a quality which seems now as remote as "It" and might be succinctly defined

as glamour on the march. They were direct in their approach, open and likeable—if they fancied a man they let him know it and then besieged him until he said yes. In films, at any rate, he always did, and one suspected that they eventually lost interest and traded in their saucily beribboned snoods for lace caps because by the end of the war it was almost impossible to find a man with enough fight left in him to give them a good run for their money.

One important class, though, has been left out of this catalogue of Forties types: the exotics. Hedy Lamarr was the most influential of them all, but on the strength of *Strange Woman* and its fellows she really belongs among the *femmes fatales*. Less remembered now, though equally the object of my devotion in those far-off days, is Maria Montez, wooden queen of heaven knows how many lost isles and tropical paradises. Though the histrionic climax of her career was probably Siodmak's *Cobra Woman*, in which she played yet another pair of twins, the deepest impression was left on me by *Sudan*, in which she met her male equivalent, Turhan Bey, for the first time. He was leader of the runaway slaves, and wore a series of bath-towels in pastel shades draped elegantly from waist to ankle, the severity of this garb being relieved by an aluminium clasp on his arm (to hide the slave brand, of course); and as his rippling torso expressed an oriental sensuality belied by his placid and, truth to tell, rather piggy features, it seemed that La Montez, the sleeping beauty of so many costume epics, was about to kindle into life. The effect was only fleeting, but it is perhaps on such electric moments that a life of true devotion to the cinema is most securely founded.

Still, granting that the pleasures to be derived from stars of the Montez-Lake vintage at the height of their wartime success are by now more than a trifle esoteric, one cannot help feeling that they would seem less evidently dated if more of them were still in any vital sense with us today, to provide a bridge back from the known to the unknown. But oddly enough, though many of the indestructible *monstres sacrés* of the Twenties and Thirties are still around, and even those who have gone generally died in harness, most of the Forties stars, ten or fifteen years their juniors, will be barely names to the younger filmgoer.

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Why? Well to a certain extent, of course, the stars of the Forties were victims of the immediate peace-time determination to get away from everything connected in audiences' minds with the war. On the top level this meant a return to the Thirties. The glossy M-G-M tradition had been temporarily tinged with the high ideals suitable for times of national emergency and, entrusted largely to the capable hands of Greer Garson, had thrown up *Madame Curie*, *Random Harvest* and *Mrs. Miniver*. Like the Queen Mary transformed into a troop ship, however, it could be returned to its original function at the drop of a hat to reassimilate Hollywood's returning heroes—Gable was back, Garson got him, and everyone was happy. Lower down the scale (in producers' estimation at least) fantasy was out and realism in, the tough self-reliant woman was replaced by the yielding, feminine type, and chic and sophistication were suddenly the qualities most sought after in the drab postwar world.

Gone were the haunted psychological dramas, the savage tales of ruthless *femmes fatales* and their ill-fated victims, the superior shockers concocted by Val Lewton at R.K.O. And in their place came a whole spate of films, accomplished enough in their way, no doubt, but not really the same, about everyday events (lynchings, race riots and all that) shot on the street where it really happened. If the hard-boiled heroine was out (the "wolverine look" of Lauren Bacall was almost her last bid), so was the sort of comedy in which she excelled. Only an occasional valiant survival like the later Bob Hope comedies (Hope must always be the passive partner to an active woman; his comic style depends on it) remained to keep such belated



Fatal women. Left: Maria Montez, with chastened legionnaire (Dennis O'Keefe) in "Siren of Atlantis". Right: Barbara Stanwyck, Van Heflin and Kirk Douglas in "The Strange Love of Martha Ivers".

exponents of the type as Jane Russell, no longer mean and moody but merely magnificent, in work. Sophistication hit the musical too. Instead of the elementary humours of the band musical, and the sort of putting-on-a-show piece in which Frank Sinatra was eaten alive by voracious women in shaggy furs apparently torn straight from the animal's back, we were presented with something sleeked and polished out of all recognition in the smooth East Coast hands of Vincente Minnelli.

The old troopers, needless to say, could negotiate these changes without the slightest difficulty—they had managed many equally hazardous in their time. Joan Crawford disappeared for a year or two and arrived back ready to face civilian life after the rigours of the Resistance with mink coat at the ready and a revolver in the pocket for any who would say her nay. James Cagney was soon to be seen staggering blood-spattered down the street-where-it-really-happened with quite as much conviction as he had ever achieved in a comfortable studio set. Fred Astaire might not have found a new Ginger Rogers, but he made out all right with Lucille Bremer (whatever happened to her?), Cyd Charisse and Leslie Caron. The newcomers, though, were not so adaptable, and the first wind of change blew a number of them right off the screen. Cornel Wilde somehow never did look really right in a suit; and Maria Montez, down to her last crocodile, had to make for Italy to find somewhere where they still produced her sort of film—a trek later to be duplicated by half of Forties Hollywood.

So the old guard were left again in command, having vanquished the first wave of challengers and ready to meet the second: the postwar tough guys (Burt Lancaster, Kirk Douglas, Robert Mitchum), the Method actors from Broadway and the glamour-boys from Universal-International, the exotics from Europe and the home-grown success stories like Doris Day and Marilyn Monroe. When they came, the wily old stagers did not try to beat them but were content to join them, so that practically any film success was likely to be achieved, at least partly, by its judicious mixture of stars from

the early Thirties and stars from the late Fifties.

So no one remembers the Forties and there are no Forties legends, no Forties Garbo or James Dean. In fact this seems finally the reason for the complete oblivion in which most of the Forties is lost: at that time the cinema in general may have been a cult, but none of the newer stars individually were. In the Thirties people had time and energy to elevate their favourites into cults, but in the Forties most people had more important things to do. Even the lonely serviceman's rosy images of Grable and Lamour soon faded in the cool grey light of civvy street. The Forties seem remarkably barren, too, in the sort of cult star whom it became O.K. for the serious filmgoer to relax with: there is virtually no one between Rita Hayworth and Judy Garland just before and Marilyn Monroe and Marlon Brando some time after. Popular the wartime favourites might be, but they had something of the feverish, phantasmal life of the dream about them; and when the dream ended they were swept away with it and forgotten, while those we knew before the dream began stayed firmly in their places.

But there is always time in the cinema to right wrongs and build legends anew. Louise Brooks emerged unimpaired from the shadows after twenty years, and when the victims of the talkies have been taken down from their shelves and dusted in the last decade a number of them have come up as good as new. Even if no disgrace ever attached to one for having missed the latest Lane Sisters film at the time, even though no one ever reduced a junior to silence by announcing that he once saw Lynn Bari plain, it is not too late. Though Deanna Durbin never won the critical esteem accorded Judy Garland (if that M-G-M test had gone differently, of course, the strap might have been on the other ankle), those who shared my experience of falling for her in 1940 at the age of five and remaining devoted right through to *Up in Central Park* may yet see their judgment vindicated. The Forties are nearly far enough away to pass from the depth of dowdiness to the height of fashion once more, and it is time they were given their second chance.

the SWEDISH paradox

by ANN MORRISSETT

IT IS IRONIC THAT AT a time when the films of Ingmar Bergman have reached such popularity abroad, Sweden's film industry has been suffering one of its worst slumps in decades. Since the arrival of television a few years ago in urban homes, filmgoers in Sweden number only about half what they were in the best years. In 1960 a large number of cinemas closed down, while fewer than twenty films were made during the year by the four major production companies: Svensk Filmindustri, Sandrews, Europa and Nordisk Tonefilm. Most of the films made in recent years have lost money, despite foreign earnings and the very low cost of production.

Fortunately some of the companies' losses are compensated by the fact that they own most of the theatres, so that box-office returns on both Swedish and foreign films do not go into other pockets—except for a 25 per cent. entertainment tax, bitterly resented by the producers, which goes to the government. (This tax is being withdrawn this year on Swedish-made children's films.) Until last year and for about a decade, however, the tax was even higher, leading to a production halt in 1951 in protest. The result of a government investigation was that some of the tax revenue was returned to the film

industry, the sole extent of any Swedish state subsidy. But the tax rebate did little to compensate for increasing production costs, then competition from TV.

When the film industry began to feel the first impact of TV, around 1957, Bergman was already so well established that SF (Svensk Filmindustri) was able to let him continue unhampered when no other director could do so. Between 1958 and the end of 1960, the industry's worst years, Bergman directed *The Face*, *The Virgin Spring*, *The Devil's Eye* and *Through a Glass Darkly*. When and if the latter two get abroad, they will probably be judiciously enough spaced so that the suffering industry can first gain as much as possible from the current (if perhaps now dwindling) receptiveness to Bergman films by showing or re-showing the old ones. The most widely exhibited Swedish film of the decade—according to the production company, Nordisk Tonefilm—was not however a Bergman film. *One Summer of Happiness*, directed by Arne Mattsson and the only film to be made during the production strike of 1951, has recently been bought for reissue in the United States and other countries. Its shimmery summer scenes of love-making and nude bathing (retained in Catholic countries, but partially obscured for the Anglo-Saxon market) contributed notably to the Swedish cinema's reputation for sexual frankness—a characteristic misrepresented through the kind of publicity given particularly in the United States and in England, countries where sex is traditionally more repressed and currently more exploited.

Bergman's *Summer Interlude*, according to the late Dr. Dymling, head of Svensk Filmindustri until his death a few months ago, actually had extra scenes of nudity inserted by enterprising American exhibitors. What happens to Swedish films when they get abroad, especially in the United States, is indeed a problem for the producers. If they get through customs to begin with—perhaps with a few scenes watered down in prepared alternate versions—they then come up against both local censors and local pornographers.

Sex or no sex, however, Swedish films have won increasing interest among foreign audiences in the past decade, primarily because a surprisingly high proportion of them have quality. The reasons for this relative excellence, in a country less populated than London, may perhaps be summed up in two phrases: regard for film as an art form and a spirit of community. Swedish producers already are a race apart from, for instance, those who set the pattern for the Hollywood stereotype.

Swedish film producers are not bad business men; but to paint a picture with the object of producing what supposedly will sell is quite another thing from painting what one wants to express with the incidental hope that others will respond to it. In film-making, however, as Dr. Dymling put it in a conversation with me shortly before his death, "the economic problem is born with the production." The investment of time, talent and materials is so great, and so directly dependent on an audience, that financial considerations cannot, of course, be ignored, even at the very beginning. Such men as Dymling, Marmstedt (one of Bergman's first producers) and Waldekranz (production chief at Sandrews) combined a practical sense of what was financially possible with an imaginative sense of what could and should be artistically possible. They brought to film-making their experience in such fields as non-commercial communications (Dymling, who headed Swedish Radio until 1942, when he went to Svensk Filmindustri), theatre and scholarship (Dymling had published original Shakespearean research; Molander, chief of SF studios, has a Ph.D. in arts; Waldekranz, who took his M.A. in the history of literature and the theatre, wrote extensively on cinema before going to Sandrews in 1942).

Anders Sandrew was one of the few cinema personalities of



Ingrid Thulin, Gunnar Hellström and Georg Ahrlin in Sjöberg's "The Judge".

the past two decades who came from a rather disparate background: rising from grocer's boy to real estate owner, he accidentally took over a movie theatre and from this developed a theatre chain which led him, in 1938, into production. As a rich man with respect for "artists", he gave his producers and directors a relatively free hand. It was this outlook which caused him to hire Rune Waldekranz and made possible such films as Sjöberg's *Miss Julie*, from the Strindberg play, and Bergman's *Sawdust and Tinsel*, as well as the semi-documentary features of Arne Sucksdorff. Following Sandrew's death in 1957, and the simultaneous blow from TV, his company has been less adventurous. The recent productions of Sucksdorff's *The Boy in the Tree* and Alf Sjöberg's *The Judge* mark, however, at least a momentary return to competition with SF for critical acclaim.

Sjöberg's new film for Sandrews also means the return of another leading theatre personality in Sweden's film history. Although he began in film-making as early as 1928, directing a silent film called *The Strongest*, for more than a decade afterwards Sjöberg worked only with the Royal Dramatic Theatre. Between 1939, when he returned to film-making, and 1943, he directed four films. Then in 1944 he made the famed *Hets* (*Frenzy*). Just as this (and the improving world situation for film-making) opened up possibilities for Bergman, so it expanded them for the more seasoned Sjöberg. His films for SF included *Iris* (1946) and *Only a Mother* (1949); then in 1950 he was invited by Sandrews to make *Miss Julie*.

Sjöberg and Bergman collaborated once again for SF more than ten years after *Frenzy*. In 1955-56 they put together a "problem" film entitled *Last Pair Out*, but by this time they had apparently gone different ways. With Swedish film-going, and consequently production, falling off, this was the last film Sjöberg directed until 1960.

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Like Bergman, Sjöberg seems basically undisturbed by the decline in production. Both feel themselves to be primarily theatre directors; and as Bergman put it to me in a conversation while rehearsing *The Seagull* at the Royal Dramatic Theatre: "The theatre is my home. This is where I want to grow old." Bergman has also compared film-making to a demanding and fickle mistress whom he is ever ready to abandon for his faithful wife: theatre. "Film-making," he told me, "makes one bleed too much. It is always exciting, and difficult and fascinating, but it makes one feel hurt, humiliated. I do not think it is a healthy form of artistic work . . . I am mainly a director of theatre." (This does not seem to be quite the way he felt several years ago, when he wrote that "The motion picture and its complicated process of birth are my methods of saying what I want to my fellow man.")

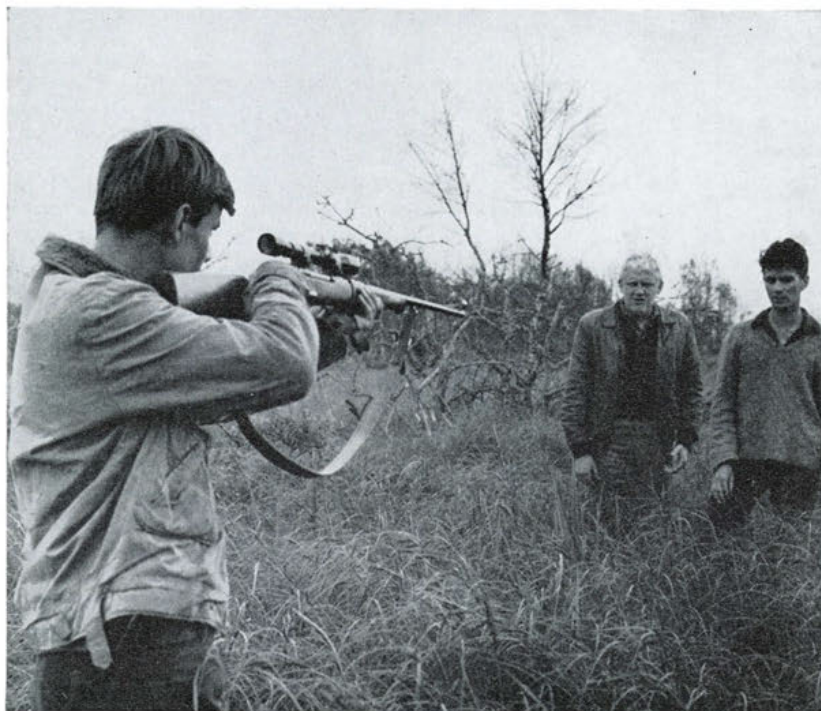
Sjöberg's observations on film-making were less vehement: he likes working in theatre and films equally, he told me. But perhaps his actions inadvertently belie his words, since in his thirty-five years of contact with both he has directed only 15 films and nearly 150 plays. Also, Sjöberg does not write original scripts, and it is undoubtedly in this function of dual creator that Bergman does much of his bleeding.

The thing these two outstanding directors have in common, not only with each other but with most of the directors and actors connected with Swedish film-making of recent decades, is their stage background and training in the dramatic schools and theatres of Stockholm, Malmö and Göteborg. Bergman, now directing for the first time at the Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm, was from 1953 to 1960 a director at Malmö. This has its practical side, of course, since film-making is almost a seasonal activity in Sweden. In the winter, when it is dark much of the time and the theatre season is on, film artists return to the stage, to occasional radio work, or to rest. A few of them sneak off to television. However, in our conversations

about TV, Gunnar Björnstrand and Max von Sydow, two of Bergman's regular company, stated quite emphatically that they were not interested in it. Gunnar Fischer, the cameraman Bergman has used for 13 of his 22 films, also told me that he was not at all tempted by television, and this seemed the general attitude in the film community. But a TV director I talked with who was formerly with SF told me that film companies have actively prevented cinema people from working in television, and that he himself is now "blacklisted" mainly for this deviation. He was one of the few, incidentally, who expressed—or perhaps was willing openly to express—somewhat negative views concerning Swedish film production, although this was largely in regard to the past few years.

In fact even Bergman and Sjöberg occasionally direct plays for television, and according to the TV and film commentator Gunnar Oldin new directors are tending to come to television rather than the film industry, especially now that the latter is so cautious. But on the whole television is looked upon more as a medium of communication than of art, and directors are more likely to stay with the theatre. Dr. Dymling told me he did not think TV had any of the possibilities of the cinema, and appeared not too pessimistic as to its undercutting of film production. "We are a small country," he said. "We don't have that much talent available. It is better used now." He felt that the film industry's relation to television would become stabilised, and in fact was already doing so.

But the taxes, and the mounting production costs, and the passing of the recent "golden years" were all things that no doubt weighed heavily on the ailing Dr. Dymling in the year or so before his death. Dymling himself, one of the grand old men of Swedish film-making, had a gentleness (but with a hand of iron, I'm told) and self-avowed dedication to the film as an art which perhaps obscured for him the possibility of admitting that there might be others who would go into film production mainly for material gain. These qualities also perhaps obscured for him the possibilities television might have as a dramatic medium. But they were responsible for his devotion to seeking the best in the film medium, and for a willingness to take risks which was both a cause and a result of his having given chances to such strange young rebels as Bergman. Even now, when the industry is low, Bergman has continued to have complete freedom in his work, though the financial profits, even with the American market, are not great.



A scene from Sucksdorff's "The Boy in the Tree".



Ingmar Bergman, with members of his company, on the set of "The Face".

Still, everyone admits that if another Bergman were to turn up now (a new rebel, an innovator), he would never be given the chances Bergman was allowed in the Forties. The present Bergman is gentler, perhaps, with more humour and less fire (or with the flames now more concentrated into a cold white heat): but it is always difficult for an innovator to find himself accepted, and he seems to sit on his pinnacle uneasily and with some scepticism. Already his popularity is passé in many intellectual circles, where articles about Bergman now appear acceptable only if they find fault with him. (In a recent issue of the Swedish film magazine *Chaplin*, several attacks on Bergman were supplemented by one which, a subsequent issue revealed, had been written pseudonymously by Bergman himself.) It is understandable that Bergman should take refuge increasingly in the faithful theatre; but it is more than refuge, too, since in Sweden theatre is also the film's life-blood.

A kind of throwback in this theatrical family picture is the photographer-director Arne Sucksdorff. There is no question that Sucksdorff is an artist with the camera, supremely sensitive to the forms and pulse of nature. Obsessed by the shapes and shadows and movements of its relentless, rhythmical struggles, Sucksdorff has for some twenty years been capturing the world of nature and animals in hundreds and thousands of feet of film, only a small proportion of which is seen by his audiences. He is known as one of the most perfectionist and extravagant of film-makers, and until recently has almost always been his own writer, director and cameraman. It is perhaps interesting to note that Sucksdorff, like Bergman both gentle and strong-willed, a sort of visual sensualist and moralist at the same time, also came from a strictly religious home. In Sucksdorff's case he was not permitted to dance, to see films or plays, could not even own a camera.

After several years of inactivity since his first full-length features, *The Great Adventure* and *The Flute and the Arrow*, Sucksdorff has recently made *The Boy in the Tree*, which departs radically from his previous work. Its theme is the familiar and fashionable one of amoral youth with nothing to do but seek destructive excitement. Whether or not Sucksdorff has managed to handle this overworked subject, and his first professional cast (including Birgitta Petersson of *The Virgin Spring*), in both a new and humanly dramatic way was a question raised by many of the film people I talked with. If he has succeeded, his own change of direction might mean a change for the Swedish dramatic cinema—a move away from the strong traditions of the theatre towards the work of directors, like Sucksdorff, who have developed from the beginning in the cinema.

Through all the changes and upheavals which are occurring and must occur in Swedish film-making, one characteristic which would be most regrettably lost is its democratic sense of

community. The feeling of working together as a group of equals, rather than in competition, has pervaded the atmosphere of both film and theatre production. Bergman expressed something of this aspiration when he described the legendary building of Chartres, for which all kinds of people came together, all anonymous. In making his films, Bergman wrote, he wanted to be "one of the artists in the cathedral on the great plain." Like Chartres, Bergman's "cathedral" seems to loom high and solitary when seen from a distance; close up, it gets a little lost in more mundane surroundings, but perhaps takes on more proper proportions as well.

Regardless of what one may think of his films, everyone I talked with who has worked with Bergman expressed only respect and admiration for him personally, including other directors such as Kenne Fant, who told me Bergman imbued him with a kind of sacrosanct feeling about film-making, and Lars-Erik Kjellgren, who now works only in TV and appears to be "exiled" from the film community. Max von Sydow, Bergman's leading young actor, said that people newly working with Bergman are often surprised at his taciturn gentleness in dealing with them. I saw some of these qualities in action (along with a rather stern moralism) when I made a tactless—albeit true—observation in writing about one of his co-workers. Bergman firmly but gently reprimanded me, making me feel that it was truly my soul he cared about, as well as the feelings of his colleague.

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In his *Page from My Diary*, Bergman describes a day during the shooting of *The Virgin Spring*, when everyone was somewhat downcast until two cranes appeared overhead and everyone dropped his work to watch. They went back to work happy and enchanted by the experience; and Bergman describes his feelings of relief and security in this atmosphere and among these people: he decides at the time to reject an American film offer. The feeling of being "at home" about which he speaks is usually more characteristic of theatre than film-making; and it is this quality which seems to have marked Swedish film-making during the Fifties and still strongly impresses the observer, even now that the "Bergman family" of the Fifties is beginning to break up.

There has been a versatility and exchange fostered, one feels, not only by the necessity for economy but by genuine mutual respect. The thing about American and English production which most impresses (or dismays) Swedish film-makers is the excess of people and materials and time squandered. When a Swedish film is in production, a director, actor, or anyone else can pick up a prop and move it anywhere it is needed without bringing the wrath of over-organised labour down on his head. Actors sometimes direct, leading actors play bit parts, directors sometimes act and often write; the star system for all practical purposes does not exist. There are not so many people standing around that one stumbles over them or has no idea who they are. There is not the frantic, disjointed tension and temperament and pressure of heavy investment pushing them; yet there is often tension of another sort, a creative and unifying kind of tension which carries them through the month or six weeks of shooting time usually taken on a Swedish film. It is almost a truism that they have been forced by physical limitations into considerations of art; on the other hand, a preoccupation with art has made financial extravagances unnecessary and even undesirable.

That most films made in Sweden are little artistic and philosophical gems is of course far from the truth. Sweden has its thrillers, family comedies and spectacles—some well done, some terrible, many very mediocre. The film companies are hoping to slip some of these into the foreign market on the tail of Bergman's successes, but the future is still most uncertain. Victor Sjöström, who helped give Swedish films their artistic ambitions and orientation in the earliest days, and whose spirit was still pervasive in the Fifties, when he appeared

(Continued on page 207)

FILM REVIEWS

SHADOW OF ADULTERY

CONTINENTAL DISTRIBUTORS are making it extraordinarily difficult to tell their films apart. Distinguish, if you can, between *The Game of Love*, *Playing at Love* and *Love is When You Make It*; or between *Infidelity* and *Shadow of Adultery*. This one-track titling may create some kind of brand image (the ubiquitous Miss Seberg hastening to an assignation in a white sports car, perhaps), but it's also doing its best to cheapen and vulgarise a film like *Shadow of Adultery* (Gala), which is precisely not the type of picture its tinny English title conjures up.

La Proie pour l'Ombre (which admittedly resists literal translation) comes from Alexandre Astruc, who in his days as a critic devised the phrase *camera stylo*—roughly, the camera with which one writes—and who at last, in this film, is really able to show us what he meant by it. The cinema, he said in a celebrated article, “will gradually free itself from the tyranny of the visual, of the image for its own sake . . . to become a means of writing as supple and subtle as the written word.” Other directors, notably Antonioni, whose influence is clear to see in Astruc's film, have preceded and perhaps helped him. His own previous films have tended to be “critic's pictures”, in the sense that one felt there was more left on the drawing-board than appeared on the screen. But in *La Proie pour l'Ombre* theory has been assimilated into technique; the film is as “written” as a novel, and Astruc now has the vocabulary for the job he set himself.

In outline, *La Proie pour l'Ombre* sounds like a problem picture for the readers of the more literate women's magazines. Its characters, effectively, are limited to three: Anna, her rich husband Eric, and her lover Bruno. Eric is a building contractor who wants a smart, intelligent, amusing wife to entertain his friends at rather glum little dinner parties where the epigrams keep pace with the courses. He lets her run the art gallery he has bought for her, and which symbolises her independence, as a harmless diversion. Bruno, who works for a gramophone record company, wins her love less by caring for her than by seeming to care for the gallery. And when the crisis comes in their relationship, the gallery is again at its centre. By making it apparent that he only sympathises with her independence as long as it makes no demands on his own, Bruno loses Anna. Her husband, whose strength and decision still attract her, goes abroad with another and more pliable companion, the kind of woman, the film says, “who expects you to give her a light even when she's holding her own lighter.” Anna is left, owner at last of the gallery, alone with her independence.

Quite explicitly, the dialogue circles around Anna's problem. The dinner party conversation, the reactions of the woman her husband goes off with, Bruno's boredom with his bachelor life, are all used to throw her situation into relief. Economically dependent on her husband, emotionally dependent on her lover, Anna is perhaps pursuing an illusion. She wants to dictate her own terms, and Astruc leaves it an open question as to whether her demands are justifiable. It is so open, in fact, that while male critics in France seem generally to take Anna's side (they wouldn't, you feel, be so rough on their own wives) one woman sociologist has accused Astruc of stacking the cards against her, giving her a background of marriage for money rather than professional training, and sees the film as an implied statement that women ought to know their place and keep to it.

These critical disagreements are explained by the film's method. Astruc poses the points at issue; his film is not merely stating Anna's situation but is saturated with awareness of it, so that decor,

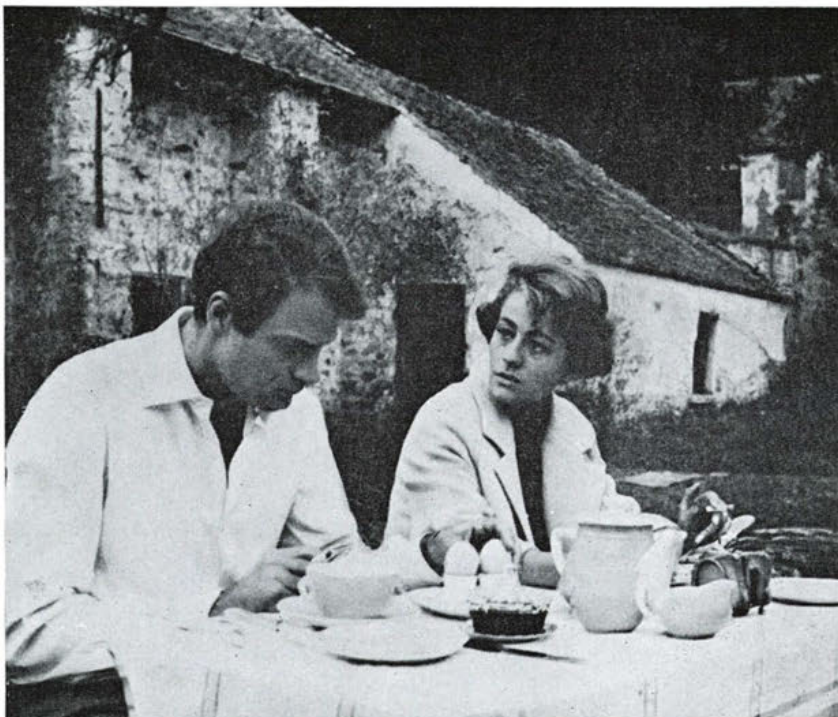
setting, atmosphere are all used as indexes to her state of mind. But this is not a first person narrative and we are not invited to see Anna's surroundings as she sees them but to watch her reacting to them. Like Antonioni in *Le Amiche*, Astruc keeps his distance; and like Antonioni he can maintain a detachment which never shrugs off into coldness. Anna, for whom Annie Girardot has called on all her considerable intelligence, is a character easy to like. She is also capable of provoking rows, blaming everyone but herself, treating her art gallery, for all the importance she attaches to it, as not much more than a smart hobby. Her sensibility outstrips her comprehension. Eric (Daniel Gélin) is similarly allowed two faces: the dictatorial husband and the man who understandably feels that his wife has backed down on a bargain. Only Bruno (Christian Marquand), with his lazy petulance, remains unequivocal, and a little dull.

La Proie pour l'Ombre does not psychoanalyse its characters or explain their ambiguities. The camera assumes the position of a well-placed observer, transmitting what it sees. A typical scene is that in which Anna hurries back to Paris to look for her husband, goes to their block of flats, with its functional concrete and stretches of clean, cold glass, hesitates, hovers, then scuttles along the balcony to look in from the outside at the home she has abandoned. The setting is given every ounce of value: glass and concrete sum up Anna's antipathy to her husband's way of life. Happiness is expressed through the supermarket and the country cottage (symbols, in a previous decade, of Hollywood enjoying itself); antipathy again in Anna's visit to the building site, where her husband is on his own, working territory.

In themselves, these backgrounds are as much the clichés of the *nouvelle vague* as the white Sunbeam Alpine which Anna drives, the shots of car headlights picking up the signposts to Versailles, the taste for playing off emotional tension against the racket of a jazz club. But Astruc, unlike some of his juniors, continually relates them to his central purpose. The showdown between Anna, Bruno and Eric takes place in the bare, operating theatre atmosphere of the recording studio. As the tension snaps, Astruc brings in the orchestra and—in a rather banal gesture of release—lets the music pour happily on over the next scene, Anna and Bruno's country retreat. For the final episode he chooses an equally contemporary setting: Orly, with the great jets preparing for take-off, symbols of Eric's world of power and property. The lovers peer through the wire fence, the jets throb with power, the Sunbeam stands waiting, so that its driving mirror can pick up the forlorn figure of Bruno as Anna drives off alone. The scene is “effective”, in that every detail does the job assigned to it, but for almost the first time Astruc has allowed a setting to get the better of him, encouraged objects not to underline emotion but to stand in for it.

La Proie pour l'Ombre is not a film one would choose to review on the basis of a single screening. Its interplay of conversational dialogue and loaded image, its open statement of a situation and elliptical resolution of it, make it a work to resee. It is another film to add to a short list: the pictures that look not like adaptations of novels but like novels composed for the screen, the films that are requesting from their audiences a new standard of literacy.

PENELOPE HOUSTON



"Shadow of Adultery": Christian Marquand and Annie Girardot.



Rita Tushingham in "A Taste of Honey": photographed by Thomas Picton during shooting of the bonfire sequence.

A TASTE OF HONEY

"HOW WILL HE BUTTER the bread?" one can't help wondering as one hurries along to discover what Tony Richardson has made out of *A Taste of Honey* (BLC/British Lion). How on earth can he bring the daylight of the film to bear on that limelit little fairy tale of the squalid? How can he? Because the touch that made a success of *Look Back in Anger*, and a near-go of *The Entertainer* (let's forget that luxury tour into Faulkner country), just doesn't seem to be the touch needed for Shelagh Delaney. As well expect, say, Bergman to get to the heart of *Le Grand Meaulnes*, or Gielgud to play Kipps. Delaney capers start one thinking of Vigo, of the Torre Nilsson of *El Caidá*, of such avant-garde American flights as *The Sin of Jesus*.

A Taste of Honey brought innocence and experience, life and daydreams, into the theatre with a rush. It is a cave-of-the-winds sort of play, in which the elements have been whisked in with a wave of the wand—or chair-leg. What happens when, in realistic cinema, they are let out? Won't they rush around and get lost, or simply vanish in perspectives of the ordinary? How can the peculiarly mordant fancies, the dialogue from the belly, so artfully cooped in by the theatre—birds in a waiting-room or monkeys in a temple—be let loose on a screen that will never really accept the imprisonment of three walls?

The answer is that Tony Richardson gives *A Taste of Honey* the air, and that a transition one is almost bound to resent is achieved with surprising ease.

Netball boldly and busily takes us out into the open, with a take-it-or-leave-it flourish, as though insisting that this schoolgirl's private love-hate adventure must be seen with its background not merely of schoolchildren's singing voices, but of kids pell-mell, and the particular—the very particular—kid Jo standing out, messing things up, furious. It is important that our first sight of Jo should be all-conquering, and Rita Tushingham beautifully embodies the role. Beautifully is perhaps hardly the word: she has a startled, unbreakable stare, a wide mouth capable of blunt expressiveness, illumination breaking out of a schoolgirl slouch. She is a schoolgirl; and her tart of a Mum (Dora Bryan) comes pretty fresh too: our first glimpse is of knees on a tousled bed, as the landlady stalks out from giving

her notice. Mother and daughter stare at one another; the old bag has a straight stare too, one of hurt puzzlement: another flit, to another room with a naked bulb and the previous lodger's slug-trails over the floor. All this and more comes before the titles, a far more elaborate and utilitarian lead-in than the trumpeting of *Look Back in Anger*. It implants not an image, but a situation; Richardson has even managed to work in the Negro sailor, by making him carry their bags from the bus! And during the flit the bus-ride in the dusk and Jo's wandering gaze have provided the excuse for some brilliant camera impressions of public statues that seem to move as we pass, including a vast broody Queen Victoria. Wonderful fancy-work to lift a humdrum event off the ground, but doesn't it stray, and let Jo slip for the sake of the charming, depersonalised eye?

However we are brought back with what might have been the trickiest business of all: the Negro lover who takes her and leaves her, as in an old ballad. How is it to be done: fantastically, as a trope, or a *deus ex machina*? Richardson negotiates it quite simply and realistically—nothing so strange about it—with the full poetry of location to help. Here and afterwards the river with its wastelands and gasometer patterns, reflections and clutter, atmospherically caught by Walter Lassally, has an important part to play in persuading us. Jo stumbles, grazing her knee; the sailor takes her aboard his empty boat; there's a chase, more frolic on shore, the night on a grassless hillock, the morning light level on the bridge that means goodbye. With a hop, skip and a jump it's all over, and if its poetry isn't daft Delaney it's very smooth Richardson.

All the hard corners after that are rounded; dissolve after dissolve slides us on with never a jolt; and Jo is a spellbinder. Jo on her own, Jo working at a shoe shop, Jo rowing with Mum (her sudden "We like it!"), Jo with a bun in the oven and her slant-eyed queer (Murray Melvin) cutting baby patterns, even Jo on a jaunt to Blackpool with Mum and her car salesman (Robert Stephens). This excursion, we may feel, along the front, in the dodgems, on to the pier, is really one too many; a vital and outrageous essence is being frittered away in the terms this director can make most acceptable. Jo's tagging on and breakaway seem only an excuse. Thereafter, in the living-room, with Murray Melvin giving an admirably shy performance, the odd pair reach their love of a kind, and Mum returning sends the sad boy packing into a street bright with fireworks.

For all its trimmings, as I'm afraid we're bound to call them, *A Taste of Honey* does make a first-rate job of material that, when it came to be handled, must have seemed hopelessly in and out of this world. Taking a calm, level view, Richardson has straightened out and imparted narrative to his wry original. It is unquestionably, I think, his best film after *Look Back in Anger*, and the film in a sense that is most his. The difficulties have urged him to bring all his skill to bear in casting, acting, atmospheric placing, the use, even the indulgence, of location. The inherent shocks and charm are respected. Pity, of course, that kid gloves should have taken over from wild mittens.

GEORGE STONIER

THE KEEPERS

CALIGARI WALKS AGAIN. Whatever Freudian or other analysis might make of it, Franju's *The Keepers* (Cross Channel) could serve as a perfect allegory for the Age of Anxiety, just as *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, that harbinger of inter-war chaos, once represented sanity and insanity as purely relative states. It lingers on the *surboum* in that cubicle-like jazz cellar, where Lesbians coil in languid embrace and dancers joggle in a desperate, nervous need for contact. It notes every twist and turn of its hero's motorcycle as he expends his undirected energies mastering a steep slope. It echoes his machine's swift ascents and descents in the vicissitudes of his own fate: to be clapped into an asylum by a father who simply wants to be rid of him; to win the love of a girl who almost succeeds in smuggling him out of the main gate; finally to escape and find his girl again only to be recaptured during his first night of freedom and dragged back to the asylum for good. *The Keepers* speaks of man's dreaded loss of identity, of a yearning to regain contact with the world beyond the asylum walls, of—to give the film its proper title—*La Tête contre les murs*. Above all, it speaks of a God grown silent, except in the eerie jubilant soprano of a beautiful mad girl (Edith Scob) in the asylum chapel, and the whirring and cooing of white pigeons.

Anxiety, according to Franju, and few would disagree with him, is the dominant fact of modern life. And certainly in the three years since *The Keepers*, his first feature film, anxiety has threatened to become the cinema's dominant cliché. It whines through Deborah

Kerr's performance in *The Naked Edge*, speaks suavely in the board-rooms of *Madison Avenue*, nags from *Psycho*'s posters and whispers into Ingrid Bergman's dressing-table mirror in *Goodbye Again*. Ironically *The Keepers*, which brings a serious, horrified eye to its depiction of anxiety and madness, displays its own built-in anxiety state. It simply doesn't come to terms with its own ambivalence. It cannot reconcile its three disparate levels. On the first, documentary level, there is the all too credible world of the asylum, with its background of endlessly crooning voices, its forcible feedings, its naked, staring light-bulbs and antiseptic walls, its clatter of spoons and shuffle of ageless men, its promiscuity and—worst of all—its threat of contamination. Two sequences are outstanding: the group playing ring-a-roses, plunged into their old, still solitude the moment they lose the contact of linked hands; and the escape of the quiet inmate (Charles Aznavour) who dreams always of boats and freedom and who eventually scales the wall only to fall down in an epileptic fit.

The other two levels, one fictional, one entirely personal to Franju, set up standards of fake or at any rate unconvincing reality in the case of the story-line, and of an almost Caligariesque expressionism on the personal level, which all but destroy one's belief in Franju's concern. The story, to begin with, is improbable and exaggerated to the point of naïveté, as are its leading characters. If indeed a delinquent motor-cyclist can be committed to an asylum because he steals from his lawyer father and wantonly burns an important brief, then we need more than the signature of an unseen family doctor to establish such a possibility. If a violent patient is allowed to carve up his work-mate's face with a saw while his doctor, instead of keeping him under sedation, looks on from a window, then we need some explanation of the oversight. If that doctor, played in Pierre Brasseur's growling, outsize manner, has indeed become contaminated by his patients to a degree where he refuses to part with a single one of them, then his condition (sadism? religious mania? obsessional neurosis? mere incompetence?) needs diagnosis. And if his helpless colleague (Paul Meurisse) is really as progressive as he claims, then more proof is needed than a showcase of therapeutic clay-modelling and an avuncular encouragement of sport.

Franju is significantly uninterested in his sympathetic characters, and is therefore lucky in having players as self-reliant as Anouk Aimée, Aznavour, Meurisse and Jean-Pierre Mocky (who also wrote the script) to tackle them. Mocky's young hero in particular comes over as oddly somnambulant, part lay-figure, the nature of his delinquency being left unexplored, part Veidt-Cesare. He is essentially a creature of darkness, a single headlight slicing his way through the night, a lost soul celebrating his short-lived freedom in a maze of neon-flashing advertisement signs. The *Caligari* parallel is nowhere more explicit than in the scene where he steals through his father's orchard and the darkened house, bearing a huge ornamental candle before him, his black leather two-piece as hieratic as were Veidt's black tights. And if Mocky is Cesare, then Brasseur and Jean Galland (the homicidally-inclined father) are the two facets of *Caligari* himself, their composite images of respectability, dedication and paternal discipline made evil by vague psychological implications, twisted into an insanity more terrible—because undetected and unchecked—than that of many an asylum inmate. In the casino sequence immediately following Mocky's escape, Franju repeats the theme of the imprisoned-sane and the free-insane in a coldly amused close-up of the spectators' faces—twitching, hypnotised, even comatose—glued to the spin of a roulette wheel. It is in this atmosphere of chance, defeat, resignation, that one senses Franju's nearness to the German silent cinema: in that clinical detachment so reminiscent of Pabst, that love of the prolonged, rhythm-breaking pan over fatalistic-looking objects reminiscent of Lang, and in that childlike tendency lying at the very heart of *Caligari* to view people as projections—either very white or very black or asleep between the two—of a madman's mind. But since doctors cannot readily be split into groups of good and bad father-substitutes, and since the hero in fact is not insane, Franju's implacably Manichean view of things makes nonsense of much of his story and weakens the validity of his attack.

A thriller, basically, remains: and, thanks to a sound track almost janizary in its chorus of bells, rook-cawings, engine-throbbles, clanging gates and general refectory bedlam, a vigilantly agitating one. Maurice Jarre's superb score carries its own current of apprehension. And Shuftan's photography—whether framing the last, grief-stricken shot of Anouk Aimée's face between the stanchions of a staircase, or watching the reaction of horses in a field to a passing funeral procession, or pinpointing a motorcycle's progress by night along a distant snake of road—has an unflagging visual eloquence. Directors other than Franju have stumbled badly



"The Keepers": Pierre Brasseur and Paul Meurisse.

trying to measure and classify universals like love, death and madness in terms of personal neurosis. Few have been as fortunate in their team of actors and technicians; for *The Keepers*, whatever else it isn't, remains a monument to firm craftsmanship.

PETER JOHN DYER

EROICA

ANDRZEJ MUNK's *Eroica* (Contemporary) inevitably invites comparisons with Wajda's *Ashes and Diamonds*. Both, in very different ways, celebrate disillusionment following total national (and moral) collapse. Wajda's is the disillusionment of tragic waste. Dream-ridden Communists and the lost generation of nationalist youth follow their heroic illusions into utter futility. But the heroism is still acknowledged. Life cannot be conceived without it; and so, after the solitary death-throes of young Poland in the ash-heap of Warsaw, nothing remains: human beings are rubbish, the diamond irremediably crumbled. Smoke, dreams, an unreal clarity survive. Thus Wajda's trilogy arrives at the nullity of Beckett or the most articulate of the New Wave films. (The death stagger which ends *Breathless* prolongs into burlesque the last agony of Maciek.) But *en route*, it gathers human density and reality by enacting—through the double time-scheme of its own subject and the Stalinist and post-Stalinist contexts in which the films were made—two of the central tragedies of our age.

Eroica, by contrast, attempts to extract an anti-heroic attitude out of disillusionment, one which will have some ethical viability. But here one wants to know about the third part excluded by Munk through dissatisfaction. For *Eroica* is also a trilogy, an anti-heroic symphony, with its third movement missing. As it is, its first part ("scherzo") and second ("ostinato lugubre") do not quite contrast or cohere. A total form fails to emerge, though an attitude, tentatively, does. Each movement however is fairly complete.

The "scherzo" satisfies least by reason of a mixture, which sometimes seems a confusion, of styles. Loose episodes circle around Dzidzius, half-spiv, half-Schweik, trying to evade involvement with the partisans drilling for the Warsaw rising. Through his wife's liaison with a slightly comic opera Hungarian officer (mixture of styles at its worst here), he finds himself contact man for a dangerous and fictitious arms deal between Hungarians and partisans. But plot here hardly matters. Interest lies in Munk's tolerant and affectionate acceptance of Dzidzius as a fellow human whose cynical disregard for heroics and bombs, whose drunkenness and cowardice and concern for his own skin, seem a sort of sanity in a crazy world. As he dodges shells and sentries, swears at an old hag's back-breaking luggage, runs for his life when the Hungarian reaches for a gun that

turns out to be a lighter, tries to surrender to a tank which he consequently parodies into a brainless space-monster, Dzidzius gradually robs anarchy of its terror. Everything turns normal and rather petty at his touch; the little man's will to survive can be more wholesome, Munk implies, than death-wish heroism. Sancho Panza becomes hero in a world where the Quixotes ride tanks and wield bombs.

Munk's comedy, despite real grimness, remains the source of affirmation in the second movement. Here comedy means the Human Comedy of a German prison camp. Firmly and unobtrusively, Munk builds up the moral clutter and physical tension of the officers' room, which drives one man (Zak) to get himself shot rather than endure more row and intimacy, and another (Zawistowski) to fight isolation, illness and exposure in an exhaust pipe on the roof, rather than betray his own legend as the officer whose escape absolves the honour of the whole caste. Here there is no obtrusive technique, simply the economics of narration: three or four shots of morning sunlight on a naked wall minutely capture the prisoners' eternity since they left the world in 1939.

Into this slow, dull torment, with its desperately precise rituals of cooking, sleeping, coffee-making, with its claustrophobic myth of the escaped man, new officers arrive fresh from the Warsaw rising—toughly self-sufficient or pitifully callow. The self-sufficient man discovers Zawistowski's secret by accident. He is being kept alive by two others at some danger to themselves. Through this incident Munk hints at his ethic. The other officers alternate between an heroic cult of honour and escape and the dull pettiness of enforced intimacy. This they take as a kind of resistance. Yet it is one at which, in the interests of the caste, the German officers also connive. When Zawistowski ends his suffering with sleeping pills, they mutually arrange to have his body smuggled out of the camp in a boiler. Further, these self-deluders drive Zak, the one really noble and self-sufficient survivor of the old officers, to his death. (A brilliantly handled scene, this. Zak wants silence. He sits in a little reading-cabin he has constructed, tortured with noise, while the callow youth tries to eat one whole food parcel for a bet. The noise rises to a crescendo. Zak rushes into the courtyard to get shot, while his fellow prisoners watch in a breathless silence that confirms the new peace of death.) But the real heroism belongs to the self-aware men, mature in their disillusionment and decency, who keep Zawistowski alive and pity his agony. Theirs is the real resistance, and wryness and self-irony are its expression. Yet is this enough? *Eroica* leaves us with the question. It hints at an attitude, yet, because of its very obliqueness and understatement, one cannot quite help suspecting that the humour and irony might be evasive rather than affirmative. One awaits more from Munk to find out.

GABRIEL PEARSON

THE SIN OF JESUS

THE SHORT STORIES of Isaac Babel are coarse little icons of peasant life. Crude and luminous, they create a special Russian inscape which is shot through with an almost sacramental violence. The prose of these harsh, ironic fables is very oblique and has a valuable obscurity which could easily be lost by translation into the explicit images of the screen. Trick photography, glares, haloes and other bravura effects cannot replace the fertile ambiguity of the written word. In fact, such devices often cramp the imagination and deprive the mind's eye of its proper exercise. Worse than that, the images may often distort the meaning of the original.

Both of these things have happened in Robert Frank's *Sin of Jesus*. In an effort to reproduce the mystical fragrance of Babel's story, he has over-decorated the film with artful dodges of photography which are distracting and sometimes ludicrous. The baroque whimsy of the wedding, for example, with the Angels played by a despondent gaggle of Blecker Street beatniks, absurd in their tatty taffeta. The film was made on a small budget, so that it is perhaps unfair to criticise those things which seem makeshift. An imaginative director, however, could have turned the limits of his budget to actual advantage. Jean Vigo does just this in *Zéro de Conduite*. He transforms a crowd of pillow-fighting schoolboys into a heavenly host simply by switching the whole scene into slow motion. In an instant the flying feathers turn into gently falling snow and the raucous louts become a procession of chanting cherubim. There

is no change of costume: no wings, timbrels or tiaras. A change of pace, no more. The effect is breathtaking.

The film is unhappily cast. Babel's heroine is a lumpish country hoyden. Julie Bovasso plays her as a sullen coffee-bar no-goodnik, and her angel figures as a tuberculous junky. The tough bucolic allegory has vanished in a confusion of urban melancholy.

There is something very revealing about the failure of this adaptation; which is also shown up in the fact that this particular story was chosen by Frank in the first place. One feels that he has been seduced by the deceptively primitive feel of the rural setting; that he has hijacked Babel's plot to dramatise some private appetites of his own. This appetite for the elementary and the primitive is pinned down by Jacques Barzun in a criticism of the otherwise much praised Family of Man album. In Barzun's analysis this album is just one symptom of a wave of American anti-intellectualism; a philosophy which rejects, "Whatever is formal and constituted, whatever is adult... or embodies complexity of thought" and embraces, "Whatever is weak and confused; what is unhappy, anonymous and elemental."

The films of Morris Engel share this whimsical primitivism, and their titles (*Lovers and Lollipops*, *Weddings and Babies*, *The Little Fugitive*) suggest the same undue dependence on the comforting, primitive symbols of childhood and fertility. *The Sin of Jesus* shows the same pre-occupation, dwelling, as it does with loving solemnity, on the girl's pregnant belly, the chickens and of course the eggs: those lovely, elemental eggs (Symbol of Life itself). It is easy to believe, as Barzun points out, that "works like these have been created in a passionate spirit of devoted love and faith in Man, but one may be permitted to ask whether the love was not blind... blind to the discretion which judgment owes to even the sincerest faith." In this work the author's rich complexity of purpose has given place to a piece of self-indulgent sentimentality. The atonal sound track simply underlines the portentousness of the work.

JONATHAN MILLER

VICTIM

IN A TIME-HONOURED tradition, *Victim* (Rank) uses the framework of a thriller—and rather a good one—to investigate a social problem. The only innovation is the problem itself: for the first time, a British picture concerns itself largely with the lives and problems of homosexuals. Understandably its plot deals with blackmail; and the film unequivocally condemns the way this is encouraged by the present state of the law. An elaborate blackmail racket is described, leading to the death of a young man, until a barrister friend of the dead youth hunts down the blackmailers and gives evidence against them, at the cost of probably wrecking his own career. His investigations allow for a tour of the more respectable parts of the London homosexual underworld, with glimpses of the ways in which different men cope with or are destroyed by their abnormality.

At first the scriptwriters (Janet Green and John McCormick, writers also of *Sapphire*) conceal their theme in a melodramatic haze, though only the most innocent will fail to penetrate it. The



"Whistle Down the Wind": Alan Bates, Diane Holgate and Hayley Mills.

cranes and scaffolding of a gigantic building site, the restless camera, Peter McEnery's nervous performance, build a feeling of suspense which, unfortunately, the picture fails to regain later when it most needs it. Further, it relies overmuch on the improbable or the dubious. Thus, who is going to blackmail a young clerk, even a wages clerk, when he has richer, if wiler, game like a barrister at his mercy? And is suicide quite so easy in a police cell? Almost as unlikely are two of the four shock revelations which punctuate the last half-hour, gaining their impact by borrowing from the conventions of the detective novel rather than the screen thriller. The other two *coups de théâtre*, with their cleverly contrived anti-climaxes, provide a big share of the film's somewhat sparse humour. Its more abundant wit is for the most part sardonic or self-pitying, as the "victims" comment on their condition and its unrewarding perils. The dialogue is slick and to the point, leading smoothly if obviously into didactic passages in which the pros and cons of the law are argued. Most of the obvious pitfalls are neatly circumvented, though at the cost of giving every character an over-explicit attitude to "the problem".

Basil Dearden's journalistic method works well in these circumstances. With reservations about Sylvia Syms' portrayal of a judge's daughter, one can give his casting and control of actors high praise. Among the relatively unfamiliar players, one notes Peter McEnery, Donald Churchill, and particularly Derren Nesbitt, giving a striking presence to the blackmailers' courier; of the older supporting actors, Hilton Edwards, Charles Lloyd Pack and Norman Bird impress in varying homosexual roles. Dirk Bogarde offers one of his best performances as the barrister, wavering between guilt and resolution. But with this character the script inevitably compromises: he is homosexual only by inclination, never by act. Yet even such equivocation is a big step towards candour, and casting a star in such a part demands courage.

The half-world through which the action moves is portrayed with deliberate tact: there is none of the actors' camp talk or behaviour which would repel or bewilder most audiences; many an everyday British comedy contains far more risqué jokes; physical relationships are never more than obliquely implied. In short, with the tragedies of death or ruined lives on one hand, and sadism and blackmail on the other, the emotional argument is heavily weighted. It is easy to sneer that Aunt Edna will have no trouble in being high-mindedly tolerant here. But allowing for public opinion—even after the Wolfenden plea for tolerance, which is not mentioned here—and allowing for industry attitudes and for censorship, could *Victim* in fact have been more frank than it is? It is only fair to say that it could not. As far as those who made it are concerned, the challenge to their skill and integrity has, for the Britain of 1961, been successfully met. The tougher challenge will come when the case is put with less sympathetic characters in unflattering circumstances, and still presented convincingly.

TERENCE KELLY

WHISTLE DOWN THE WIND

IF ONE WERE UNAWARE of Bryan Forbes' background, as screenwriter and actor, it mightn't be too hard to deduce it from his first feature, *Whistle Down the Wind* (Rank). It is a film which seems to have set precision of detail, in the way words are spoken, the way people move, as its first objective; and this unassuming, matter-of-fact technique goes an extraordinarily long way with a subject bounded on every side by whimsy and mawkishness. Children; small animals; the simple faith which stops a murderer in his tracks: Mary Hayley Bell's anecdote is as dangerous as a mine-field, and Bryan Forbes and his screenwriters, Keith Waterhouse and Willis Hall, have managed to traverse it with only minor injuries.

Careful preparation steers us neatly past the first hazard. When Hayley Mills greets the fugitive hiding out in the barn as Jesus, and her little brother and sister follow her lead, we accept the situation because of the practical terms in which it's put. The children are not meekly adoring but nervously pre-occupied with their own behaviour. Ought they to curtsy; should they purloin the family bottle of port? The hoarse, sceptical little boy (Alan Barnes) and his decorous sister (Diane Holgate) are given reactions so well within their grasp that the rightness of their responses carries the film with it. Equally well managed are the scenes with the father (Bernard Lee) and aunt (Elsie Wagstaffe), the latter ignoring the children not out of cruelty but because she is, and is made to seem, simply too tired to bother. In this setting only Norman Bird, as the



"Infidelity": Micheline Presle as the dress designer.

hired hand, comes across as too calculatedly watching the effects of his own performance.

What can look like faith in three children, however, comes dangerously close to gullibility when it is extended to fifty. In the playground fight, when one small boy is made to deny Jesus three times at the behest of an errand-boy Judas, a New Testament parallel becomes rashly explicit. And although this is then dropped (the fugitive is betrayed involuntarily and not by the bully), damage to credibility has been done almost from the moment the other children appear. At the end, when they all dash towards the barn, to watch the murderer assume a crucifix stance against the skyline as he's searched by the police, the direction is too tentative to know what to do with them. In the terms in which it's posed, the climax invites vulgarity, in the best Fellini manner. Dodge this, as Bryan Forbes so discreetly does, and there is not a great deal left.

But the qualities of *Whistle Down the Wind* are more than tactfully negative. Those rain-washed Lancashire fields and ditches, as photographed by Arthur Ibbetson, establish the story immediately in depth. Scenes with the local vicar, whose devotion is all for the church roof, and with the puzzled Sunday school innocent, exploit comedy to make genuinely critical points. And the fugitive himself, played by Alan Bates with a glazed and tongue-tied melancholy, is never allowed to collapse into the inertia of a character who is only standing in for a symbol. On their home ground, Keith Waterhouse and Willis Hall can turn out tape-recorder dialogue as smartly as Chayefsky. They aren't out for poetry, and in this context one can be grateful. It is not the beacon of faith that illuminates *Whistle Down the Wind*, but the chilly Northern light of Alan Barnes' sadly dismissive "That's not Jesus—it's just a feller".

PENELOPE HOUSTON

PLAYING AT LOVE and INFIDELITY

PHILIPPE DE BROCA's *Playing at Love* (Contemporary) has a slight, domestic comedy theme. Two lovers live together. She wants marriage and a baby. He resists but, after various subterfuges on her part, eventually gives in and accepts the responsibilities of a family man. Familiar material basically, but part of de Broca's success with it comes from his obvious delight in the incongruous juxtaposition. He has a natural feeling for youthful exuberance, and knows how

to control individual situations and characters. One quite long sequence features little but the lovers muttering quietly to themselves, she over her accounts, he over his painting, yet it stands by itself as well as preparing the way for a sudden break-out into wild dancing to the trumpet and an ancient horned gramophone. Many scenes spill out in the same way. A jazz club sequence becomes a satirical riot of noise and dancers' antics. A picnic, begun to the violent strains of transistor radio music, continues with horseplay in the grass and the abandoned snatching-up of armfuls of flowers.

In creating this atmosphere, which might be described as a tongue-in-cheek view of youth on the boil, de Broca is well served by Jean-Pierre Cassel, whose behaviour is a virtual parody of the Latin temperament. A fond editorial device also contributes. This consists in establishing three central characters (boy, best friend, girl), then sending them in different directions so that two have a riotous time while the third is left in glum solitude. Thus, while the girl (Geneviève Cluny) and her current fiancé are having an awkward time of it in the brash jazz club, de Broca keeps cutting away to the jilted lover trying to nurse his grief while being buttonholed by boring strangers. A lovers' quarrel, in which the girl threatens to go over to the best friend ("Don't underestimate François," she warns), is interrupted by a shot of François fatuously cleaning his ear with a stick; a Sunday morning romp in bed cues off a cutaway to a group of staid matrons leaving church. And so on.

As well as a sense of humour about love, de Broca has a marked pictorial flair. He sets his lovers in a junk-shop amidst a glorious jumble of bric-a-brac, and will go from this to the chillingly stark for effect, as in the lunatic sequence of a salesman pressurising a customer into a new flat with its waste of empty white plaster and effective echoes. Each of the love scenes, which constitute most of the action, is handled with delicacy and wit, and the over-all satirical mood is heightened by odd and unexpected encounters with minor characters. Originality, in fact, is its own reward in many scenes; though if the film has a weakness it is that one never quite loses an awareness of its underlying tenuity, so that whenever the invention and timing let up the whole thing tends to sag.

De Broca's latest film, *Infidelity* (Miracle) attempts the same sort of light-hearted approach, with two lovers who outwit their respective partners (ingenuous husband and rich, eccentric mistress) to indulge their romantic yearnings together. The exuberance is still there, most successfully in sequences like the startling clog dance, and in François Perier's volubility on visits to national monuments and rare evenings out. The love of décor is expressed this time in several exotic split-level apartments, and in a scene of restless fingering of *objets d'art* in a visually rich antique market. The film is memorable in particular for its climactic party, arranged by the jealous older woman to confront the cuckolded husband with his wife's lover, which fails when they take to each other on sight. François Perier (husband), Micheline Presle (mistress) and Jean-Pierre Cassel (gigolo) are all excellent, though a bewigged Jean Seberg as the wife is a little out of her depth. Yet here, even more, the impression is of slender material stretched to and beyond its limit. Where a director's first work establishes his individuality, his third, alas, too often shows up the weaknesses of a comedy stylist trying to find and then maintain his level.

PHILLIP RILEY

In Brief

FILMS LIKE *A COLD WIND IN AUGUST* (United Artists) pose problems for the critic with stern moral principles, since one of the sternest is likely to be that it is the duty of the independent filmmaker to be independent at all costs and in every conceivable way. *A Cold Wind in August* is independent enough in the conditions of its making, but as far as the substance is concerned it has clearly been devised with an eye to the current Hollywood product and in the hope (which may afflict even the most high-minded independent at times) of getting back the money invested in it, with preferably a little profit as well.

Even the plot-line is not too far out by present Hollywood standards: it concerns an ageing stripper who gets involved in an affair with a 17-year-old boy and then finds that she has fallen in love with him. He thinks he is in love with her, until he finds out what her profession is and goes off, primed like the hero of *Le Blé en Herbe* with the experience he has received in the arms of the older woman, to make the most of his talents with a girl his own age. Nothing very experimental here, obviously; but when one considers

it, why should there be? What does it matter if the subject is one which might be treated by a commercial film-maker, indeed by precisely the most commercial type of film-maker, provided only that what emerges is a good film? And this, against all expectations, it is.

The temptation, confronted with such a case, is either flatly to deny the film any qualities, or to say that though the subject may be basically sensational the treatment redeems it by its unusual sobriety and seriousness. But *A Cold Wind in August* is not "serious" in that sense at all: it does not adopt a high moral tone of any sort; it does not, whatever intentions the director may attribute to himself in public, make even the vaguest attempt to study its characters in depth. It simply tells the story of an unlikely and overpowering sexual attraction based on an unexpected and short-lived mutual fulfilment of needs, and tells it unusually honestly. This means, of course, that it is sensational (sex if honestly depicted is always, in the modern cinema, sensational) and not at all nice or reassuring. But it is fresh and lively, with glints of tough humour and moments of remarkable intelligence in the scripting (by Burton Wohl from his own novel), particularly in what concerns the boy's father, a model of moderation and good sense in the circumstances, and in the conclusion, where nothing is glossed over and the final scene between the ex-lovers is played right out in all its embarrassment.

Lola Albright and (especially) Scott Marlowe do well in parts for which they are obviously too young and too old respectively. (Their appearance together is supposed to cause shocked stares, but actually they look just like any other young couple; one wonders what, say, Joan Crawford and Troy Donahue would have done with the roles.) Alexander Singer's direction is plain and straightforward, any art around being, as it should be, incidental rather than designed. *A Cold Wind in August* is not to be taken too seriously on any level, but it is worth seeing, and at least it is never dull.

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR

OUR LAST SPRING (Warner-Pathé) is Michael Cacoyannis's most ambitious film so far; and the one which falls shortest of its aim. It is adapted from a novel, *Eroica*, by the Greek writer Cosmas Politis, and is an essay in the romantic re-creation of the private life of childhood and adolescence. It is a hard genre, and few films apart from Melville's *Les Enfants Terribles* have brought it off. Here the story is about a gang of boys and the secret world they create—their occult societies, their passionate attachments and hatreds and loyalties, their heroes and their ideals; and about the events—the death of a friend, encounters with the children of the British Consul—which destroy their tight-knit, Spartan comradeship.

Like worse and better films of the sort, this one hesitates fatally between the two worlds: the reality of grown-ups, and the intenser reality of adolescent fantasies. Cacoyannis's viewpoint is never quite firm, so the private world he is trying to create never clearly emerges. Sometimes he hits on a striking scene which seems accurately and touchingly to reflect the boys' tortured fantasies—the ceremonial games which their leader Loizo solemnly organises on the beach as the dead comrade's funeral passes by on the cliff top; their ritualistic persecution of those who offend them. At other times, though, you feel (as, often, in *A Matter of Dignity*) that Cacoyannis is beguiled into striking effects of dialogue or of image simply for their own sake.

He has added to his difficulties by making the film in English: it is his own production, and presumably his intention was to aim at a larger market than Greece alone can offer. The script (by Cacoyannis and Jane Cobb) is cluttered with clumsy explanations of why all the characters are stumbling along in halting English in this way. Worse, the language has disastrously inhibited practically all the performances; and this is the sort of film where performances count for everything. Of the Greek players, the principal actor, Alexander Mamas, copes best; but the synthesis of the stolid, handsome presence of Panos Goumas with the dubbed, too-mature voice of the director himself makes Loizo, the boys' hero, a weirdly un-persuasive figure.

When it comes to the English performances, one feels that Cacoyannis (though he speaks English and has acted in England) was too little intimate with nuances of the spoken language to be able to guide his actors. Minor roles are mostly stereotype F. O. caricatures; Marie Ney, as an English governess, takes the matter into her own hands and gives an irritatingly 'professional' performance; and the artlessness of the younger players, Jenny Russell and Patrick O'Brien, which could, with skilful direction, have been turned to positive advantage, remains a mark of the clumsy amateurism that handicaps so much of this film.—DAVID ROBINSON



"The Miracle of Malachias".

FIFTEEN YEARS AFTER

NOTES from WEST GERMANY

by ROBERT VAS

IT TAKES ONLY NINETY minutes for the Viscount to bring us from London's hazy sunshine to the wide fields of Germany; time enough though for world politics to change drastically beneath us, on what they call firm ground. Mr. K. declares that he is as hard as nails as far as Berlin is concerned. Eichmann declares that he is innocent as far as Auschwitz is concerned. Past, present and future mingle into a Brechtian organ-grinder's ironies, while the plane pierces its way through the hopefully clear sky.

"Ninety minutes—no more than the running time of *The Murderers Are Amongst Us*." I cannot resist this undisciplined comparison, not only because my routine job as a cataloguer of film titles haunts me even while on holiday, but perhaps because the German tragedy is still imprinted on my mind through Staudte's painfully honest self-assessment immediately after the war. To me in its time that was a fitting liquidation of the past, with a bitter yet rich promise for the future. That was the period of those genuine "firsts" all over Europe—*La Bataille du Rail* in France, *The Last Stage* in Poland, *The Silent Barricade* from the Czechs, *A Piece of Land* from Hungary—all concerned with the immediate, burning past, all searching for a suitable new language, all trying responsibly to define a complete truth.

But that "anno zero" was fifteen years ago. Since then the new language has lost its edge, smoothed away by an endless flow of diplomatic notes. The complete truth lies perhaps only

on that strip of no man's land between the two Germans. The Brechtian organ-grinder would probably sing now about East and West, instead of rich and poor.

So the Viscount is in fact landing not at the airport of an average German provincial town, but in the "foreground of world interest". The town doesn't show it, though. It's much more settled and workaday. It is neat, disciplined, chatty, and in less than an hour I feel myself already well inside Germany. I could take a walk through the town without even using a map. . .

In fact, on that first evening, I began my search for "the answer": the explanation to the questions we all ask ourselves, emotionally, naggingly, or just out of natural anxiety. "How on earth is it possible? How *could* it happen? Has it really shaken them? How do they face up to it today?" One searches for hints of an explanation in the immaculately designed new buildings, in the self-satisfied *petit bourgeois* calm of the family hotel; in a decorative poster announcing a scientific lecture on "Aspects of Anti-Semitism in the Arts"; in the polysyllables of the language, the dignified bow when shaking hands—above all in the many films seen at random, not "significant" films perhaps but revealing ones.

Inevitably, one expects a certain kind of intellectual reparation, an obligation almost for the German film-maker to face up to what has happened and why. How is this debt going to be settled?

Cinematically, the first resounding steps in march time were taken by Leni Riefenstahl in those magnificently wicked moments of *Triumph of the Will* when the camera rises above the crowd like a pictorial flourish of trumpets, or slits its way between the columns of swaggering brown shirts. All that is left of this frightful pageant twenty-five years later is a flat, silent, bomb-pitted plain of stones, the huge square where it took place. This is the ground on which an interesting short film, *Brutality in Stone* (by Peter Schamoni and Alexander Kluge: 1960), is built. It attempts to expose the soulless and aggressive architecture of the Nazi era.

But, in comparison with the credo which was so apparent behind every shot of Miss Riefenstahl's picture (you can't create those magnificent set-ups, those dehumanising angles and "forward, *über alles*" editing techniques from sheer talent alone), this counter-film tries to settle the account with the past through cold, formal images. The sound track carries the roars of the ecstatic crowd, echoing over shots of the empty square, and the photography concerns itself meticulously at one and the same time with the significant and the decorative. A slow tracking shot along colonnades towards a door contrasts with a voice reading an authentic description of how prisoners were carried to the door of a gas-chamber. These are ideas which might well have worked on paper, but there remains a gap between conception and execution. And there is no forceful indication that between these two different expressions of a related theme there lies a world tragedy.

There can be no doubt, however, that the film's intentions are sincere. Indeed the past has a formal weight, in words, on paper or on film, and when it comes up in art or conversation the tone is grave and dignified, striving towards authenticity. The text about how people were carried to the gas-chamber *must* be genuine. Yet the attitude is somehow intellectualised. A serious West German picture about the past would think it degrading to simplify events into such a directly emotional plot as that of the German soldier's efforts to save the pretty Jewish girl in the East German/Bulgarian *Stars*. This would be unconvincing, not sufficiently serious and theoretical.*

It would be even less likely for this gravity to give way to the effective gutter-press devices of *Aktion J*, the latest East German propaganda film. Here mischievous little arrows are used to point out the alleged villain of the piece in the photograph on the screen, and a Jewish cantor's harrowing prayer song accompanies images of the Warsaw ghetto. Again the effect is superficial yet, in a quite different way, the work is seriously, passionately intended. In West Germany there are either the cheaply made commercial films on Hitlerist "child factories", officers' schools or punishment battalions (these cashing in on the undeniable fact that the average German loves to see his race in uniform), or the cold, deliberate records. An educational documentary, outstanding in its genre, reconstructs Hitler's rise to power up to the mid-Thirties. Dispassionately it accepts the shaping forces of history, which—to quote the last passage of the film—"a few years later resulted in humiliation" (and here the image shows a scene of deportation), "starvation" (a shot of emaciated prisoners) "and incinerated corpses" (the crematorium in Auschwitz). It is almost like an enumeration of scientific techniques of liquidation.

Bernhard Wicki's *Die Brücke*, perhaps the most talked about of all the films on Nazism, has no name credits on the screen, implying perhaps that it is the creation of history and the German people themselves. Consequently this honest, austere planned work speaks again in the sober tones of documentary realism. It tells the story of seven youngsters in a small German town during the last weeks of the war. Episodes in their lives seem loosely linked, though rather too obviously designed to prepare them for a forthcoming trial of

strength. Family conflicts give way to muted lyrical passages, "bad Germans" to "good Germans"; and there seems to be one of the latter in every family, in the school, even in the dreariest barrack room. But the school fails to convince us that behind its walls lies a whole time-tested system of Nazi education. So, when the boys receive their call-up papers, their outburst of joy comes as a surprise, a reaction for which their circumstances have not prepared us.

Throughout the film's first hour, the execution is cold and immaculate—too much so for the documentary truth the film is after. The carefully timed conflicts are as surface-smooth as the baby faces of the *Burschen*, all wrapped up in crisp cellophane. When, a little later, these faces are covered with mud or distorted with horror, they no longer seem real.

For it is almost an hour before we learn what the boys are being prepared for. Hastily thrown in to defend a local bridge and left without a commander, they provoke an heroically uneven battle against the American tanks. Six of the seven are spectacularly killed. The film means to shock us by its harsh reality; but it overreaches itself. The more horrifying the context, the more we realise the absence of that poetic grasp which would transcend the horror, until something dangerously close to apathy sets in. This is not just a question of *mise-en-scène* or simple talent. It is more disappointment that the past fifteen years have not distilled from the subject a sense of the all-embracing, dramatically universal experience. Germany stills owes us the *Westfront 1918* of World War Two. What is holding back its appearance?

* * *

The curtain-raiser to the latest Helmuth Käutner picture is a newsreel about the Vienna meeting of the two leaders. Mr. Kruschew enjoys *Die Zauberflöte*; an informal President Kennedy lunches. A flash of the Brandenburg Gate symbolises the subject of their talks. Then comes an advertisement commending the whipped cream of a local *patisserie*, and a trailer for the latest *schnultze*, that innocent, blonde type of commercial picture which now has resolute girl singers with Seberg hairdos instead of a smiling Hans Albers in top hat and tails.

The auditorium is depressing and almost empty. Cinema admissions have declined rapidly during the last few years; producers are loaded with heavy taxes; state subsidies have been reduced; the prize for the year's best film has not been awarded. And these few people, sitting at the early afternoon performance and taking in Kruschew and whipped cream, remind me of the comment the journalist Erich Kubly made on the German situation: "Seventy million people in two Waiting Rooms."

Then, suddenly, Käutner's *Black Gravel* bursts angrily on to the screen. Rain is pouring, soaking the ground of a newly-built American airbase in West Germany. A juke-box refrain of "Hey Joe, come on Joe!" dominates the everyday sounds of village life (the locales, again, are as authentic as the circumstances of the story) and old military marches mix with the latest jazz. This menacing, desperate atmosphere holds until the final fade-out.

The story, though less fully realised than the mood that surrounds it, is one of the compromise, rebellion and final resignation of a truck driver. He tries to make the best of the new circumstances, accepting life with lazy cynicism, until the moment when his former mistress is taken by the American commander. Fighting an overpowering apathy, he attempts to win her back; momentarily, she too is willing. But on the threshold of action he accidentally commits murder and is forced into lonely flight. The rebellion is as tired as the endlessly drizzling rain, the forlorn, grey tone of the whole picture. And the end of a seemingly attacking film is a bitter surrender. This seems more like rubbing salt into old wounds than trying to meet problems face to face.

But where is the *real* face? To see Dr. Ottomar Domnick's *Gino*, on the same afternoon, is like being left alone in a

* Though, paradoxically, for me the most subtle film on Germany in the last war comes from the party-conscious East German industry: Kurt Jung-Alsen's *Duped till Doomsday*.

Kafkaesque operating theatre hermetically sealed against all the black gravel, military bases and international conferences. All we are left with is the medical case history. Domnick, nerve-doctor and experimental film-maker, puts on his rubber gloves and with a small, coldly glittering scalpel cuts open "the problem": a strange relationship between a middle-aged woman and a callow young man, an employee at her husband's sawmill.

She is a Duras-like novelist, sitting alone at her typewriter and visualising "the novel" in long, geometrical tracking shots along bleak autumn horizons. A chamber orchestra plays Bach in the background, while the bare, streamlined flat boasts an almost aggressively intrusive painting by Paul Klee. Into this world of the intellect enters the eternal simpleton: and their clinically anti-erotic relationship is developed through three Freudian dream sequences, subsequent tragedy and more tracking shots. Doctor Domnick forgets to stitch up the wound; but no matter, it was only a symbolic one.

The choice, then, seems to be between the films yearning for an invulnerable, long-lost classicism, the decorative spiral staircases leading nowhere, coldly caressed by a glossy camera with Bach in the background—and the sodden military bases, with dreams and corpses covered by black gravel, with the howling of trucks and fighter-planes providing the accompaniment. Isn't there any healthy middle way? Must it be either variations on extremism or commercial *schmaltz*? But the present period of the "two waiting-rooms" seems to preclude the taking of a middle way, a sober measurement of both present and past. And the films I have mentioned here unanimously voice the same warning.

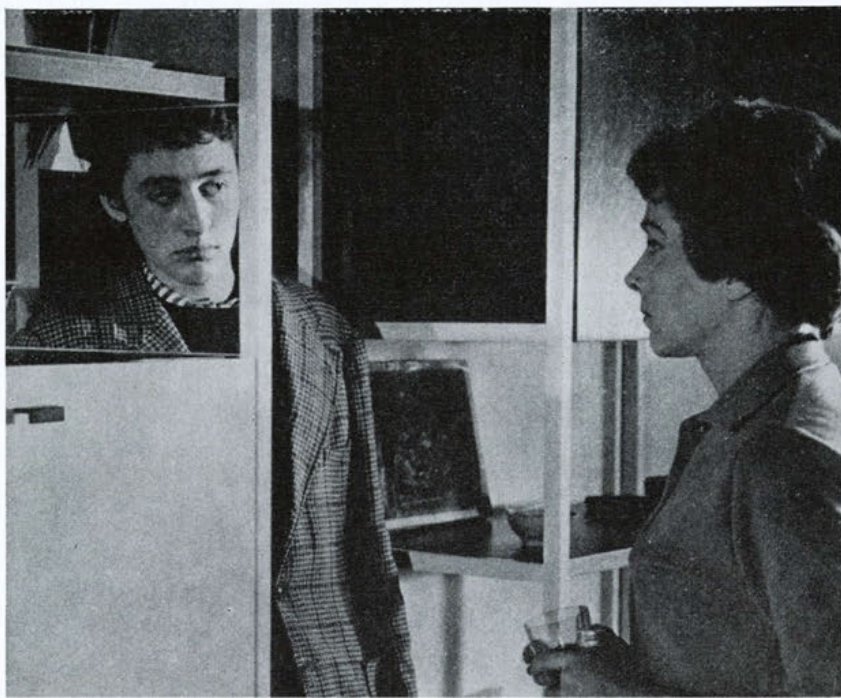
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Some efforts have been made during the last few years to break into the "grey" middle territory. Heinz Tichawsky and Rolf Hans Strobel, two young sociological documentarists, made a piece of reportage on the odd ways in which the *Wirtschaftswunder* manifests itself in certain districts of Bavaria. But the film was refused a state Predikat, which means that it is virtually impossible for it to be shown in Germany. Bernhard Wicki's first film, a semi-documentary feature called *Why Are They Against Us?* (1958) set out to present Teddy boys as hard-working people searching on their motor-bikes for sympathy, but encountering only stiff middle-class prejudice. The film has its moments of charm and apt criticism of a jaded way of life; but it all remains something reported rather than felt.

Wildly tilted angles, so that the molten metal seems to be hissing out of the forms holding it, mark the factory sequence of Wicki's film. And the same sort of calculated effects leave the spectator detached from another non-commercial effort, Bodo Ulrich's *Jazzbanditen* (1959), which is a kind of crisp, airtight, Teutonic *Mamma Don't Allow* about a small town jazz club. Here again, sophisticated techniques obtrude; the film will readily sacrifice spontaneity for the sake of a tricky transition from, say, a car headlight on to the dark bell of a trombone.

It seems rather hopeless to transplant such devices from the expressionist past into an era when German stars have names like Corny Collins, Boy Gobert and Sexy Sommer, and the *schnultzes* are looking for backgrounds under a tropical sky instead of the local *tankstelle*. Perhaps that legendary German flair for thoroughness and decorative stylisation, that too self-conscious social attitude, does make it difficult to look reality in the face and treat it artistically without enlarging or degrading it. Murnau showed it reflected in the glittering buttons of a splendid porter's uniform; Jutzi through the eyes of a sentimental working-class mother; Ruttmann used it for a formal *étude*. Paradoxically it was perhaps Leni Riefenstahl who managed best to hit off the real in those frighteningly grey

The war and after. Above: Käutner's "Black Gravel". Centre: doomed conscripts in Wicki's "The Bridge". Below: novelist and protégé in Ottomar Domnick's "Gino".





"Natürlich die Autofahrer".

and vibrantly grainy close-ups of the haranguers at Nuremberg. And when Siodmak and his friends took the camera for a lively picnic, the result was real "people on Sunday".

Today the same type of adventurers prefer to pack zoom lenses alongside their sandwiches. Students of the flourishing film club at the local university viewed the Free Cinema films as a kind of admirable tourists' material and managed to find a continuity mistake in *A Diary for Timothy*. . . . They are busy trying out their new Arriflex camera, around which the whole group collects with that almost spiritual delight which only a German can show while admiring such a delicate piece of machinery. It would be almost unworthy of it simply to take it out into the street to catch the fresh air of life.

Thirty years ago the Brechtian barrel-organ of *Dreigroschenoper* began grinding: something *had* to be stylised, an atmosphere perhaps whose measure the artist was not yet able to take. There had to be detachment from actuality, from the dramatic unities, and the result was a jumble of ironies, in which the tunes of the barrel-organ became a kind of marching song for approaching world confusion.

Time and need has come, it seems, to bring the barrel-organ back into action. The lyric might be "Hey Joe, come on, Joe!" Again, the concepts edge towards the picaresque: *The Girl Rosemarie* is overtly Brechtian; *Wir Wunderkinder* uses its two young lovers as organ-grinding narrators in a keyhole view of 45 years of German history. The gap between the Big Man who leads and the underdog who obeys is basically still the same as in *The Captain of Köpenick*. Staudte's distinguished prosecutor is collared by an irrepressible little wandering salesman; Ladislao Vajda's Little Man hero can see and walk through walls to expose bureaucracy; Wicki's priest, in *The Miracle of Malachias*, prays for a miracle, and one day an entire night club is transferred to a nearby island—to help the story uncover corruption and hypocrisy.

Angry and bitter, but still finally evasive, these films perhaps reflect the true feelings of people here in the "waiting-room" where I'm looking for my explanation. But what could there be to explain? Right now the country is waiting for something to happen, as in the Brechtian days. The Master, smiling and smoking his cigar, might suggest humbly and in free verse that the great powers should study a country's cinema and theatre production before arriving at a decision. But he gave other useful advice which the world hasn't taken seriously . . .

West Germany, June 1961

BOOK REVIEWS

LE DESSIN ANIME APRES WALT DISNEY, by Robert Benayoun. (Jean-Jacques Pauvert, Paris. Distributed in Britain by George Proffer, 60s.)

THE STARTING POINT of Monsieur Benayoun's admirable essay is Walt Disney. If his attack on the old master of the cartoon seems uncompromisingly harsh, it is only fair to recall that the ascendancy—not to say stranglehold—which Disney attained was such that the whole art of the animated film was imperilled by his own artistic stagnation. In countries as various as Russia, China, Italy, India, his influence still inhibits cartoon film-makers.

M. Benayoun's thesis on Disney's decline is fascinating and convincing. He demonstrates how Disney's first tendency, to endow animals with human characteristics in the Aesopian manner, led to an obsession with the literal. He demanded from his animators exacting studies of natural history and human behaviour. His greatest aid to literal realism was the multiplane camera, that "grosse Bertha du trompe l'oeil." After *Snow White* Disney was baffled by the problems of making people in cartoon films look and act like real people. Two solutions offered themselves: one was to combine real people with animated characters (*Uncle Remus*, *The Three Caballeros*); the other was the morbid method employed in *Cinderella*, *Peter Pan* and *Alice in Wonderland*—to film scenes with actors, then to trace them. The logical culmination of the process was to turn to acted films, which Disney did. At the same time, "Quant à la nature, eh bien, puisqu'il ne pouvait plus aller à elle, Disney la fit venir à lui." In his True Life Adventures Disney succeeded in making real animals behave like the creatures in his own cartoons.

M. Benayoun is merciless towards Disney's aggressive philistinism, his scorn of books, his remark that the Pastoral Symphony sequence of *Fantasia* would "make Beethoven", his unashamed debasing of the artists such as Tenniel and Ernest Shepard from whom he borrowed, the narcissist fantasy of Disneyland. He derides Disney's abortive attempts to follow the new trends (*Toot*, *Whistle*, *Plunk and Boom*). Everything goes to prove his point that: "One can't make animated films in 1960 without first having absorbed and assimilated the fluctuations of modern art—abstract art, *tachisme*, futurism and surrealism—without being aware of the *avant-garde* in the theatre, of functional architecture . . . without having some small idea of the golden number."

The animated cinema was one of the few areas in which the economic difficulties of the postwar cinema throughout the world were turned to positive advantage. Now the extravagant and elaborate production line techniques are definitively outmoded; and necessity has proved a stimulus to the development of the sparer and more personal techniques that have marked the work of the new schools.

M. Benayoun's heroes of the new age are Trnka, Bosustow and McLaren. Trnka was the first to impose an uncompromising artistry on professional animated films. When his work was first shown at Cannes in 1946, "many of the audience found themselves looking critically for the first time at that week's Donald Duck."

Bosustow's career at the Disney Studios is an illuminating episode. For seven years, apparently, he worked in the impersonal atmosphere of Burbank, hating the glossiness and archness of it all, longing to make films for adults, films in a few simple colours instead of the 1,200-hued Disney palette, films with square people or triangular people instead of the drably literal and three-dimensional Disney characters. Then came the famous Burbank strike; Bosustow was one of the dangerously progressive spirits subsequently dismissed, and UPA, in spirit at least, was born. M. Benayoun characterises the work of UPA as *animation impressioniste* and acutely traces some of its influences—Klee, Miro, Mondrian, Dufy, Matisse, Ernst, Modigliani, Pollock; Bemelmans and Thurber; John Alton, Struwwelpeter and W. C. Fields.

McLaren links the *avant-garde* with older traditions of animated cinema. His acknowledged masters are Cohl, Lye and Fischinger. The description of McLaren as the first surrealist of the animated film perhaps underestimates the Freudian awareness of some of his fantasies.

M. Benayoun acknowledges other heroes: Alexeieff, for instance, and Tex Avery, the master of M-G-M and later Universal sadistic cartoons. It is intriguing to learn that all his efforts to discover a personality and a history behind this name have failed. He speculates as to whether any such person exists at all.

When he comes to the new European schools, M. Benayoun's analyses are sketchier and more provisional. He gives less than their due to the remarkable contemporary Yugoslav animators, and perhaps rather more to the 'Parisian' school. His treatment of the Poles, Borowczyk and Lenica, is more admiring than actually appreciative. It is gratifying to find him writing of the British scene: "L'Angleterre rigide possède ses chiens velus, ses goons, et ses intellectuels furibards," and instancing such artists as Philip Stapp, John Daborn and the Foldes.

The book is elegantly presented. There are several hundred illustrations, intelligently selected and arranged. Besides stills, there are illuminating comparisons of modern painting. Seurat provides inspiration for Alexeieff; McLaren's *A Phantasy* is compared with a Tanguy painting; Mary Ellen Bute is influenced by Kandinsky. A useful select filmography, listing films by almost a hundred artists, gives some idea of the richness of animated cinema today.

DAVID ROBINSON

PERIODICALS

AS THE FLOW of quality pictures from Italy and Spain increases, a number of little magazines have emerged, mainly centred round university film groups, in rather the same way that recent French successes sparked off new publications. *Inquadratura* and *Film Selezione* are probably the liveliest from Italy. Spain's new *Temas de Cine*, which is really a branch of the adventurous young production company called Films 59, has published complete screenplays of the company's first two successes, *El Cochecito* and *Los Golfos*, as well as a number devoted to the work of the current dean of Spanish-speaking cinema, Leopoldo Torre Nilsson. *Film Ideal*, also Spanish, is spirited, enthusiastic, and equally concerned with cinema abroad and at home. From France, *L'Avant Scène du Cinéma* also publishes detailed scripts, ranging from *Les Mistons* to *La Princesse de Clèves*.

In England, the recent critical debate has strengthened the voice of *Definition* and plays a part in a new magazine—*Motion*, published under the auspices of the University Film Makers Association. Its first issue carries articles on *L'Avventura* and *La Dolce Vita*, a somewhat whimsical interview with Dwight MacDonald, and a nostalgic survey of Britain's innocent cinema audiences. *Definition* is gradually defining itself through Boleslaw Sulik's long-needed assessment of Andrzej Munk's work (in No. 2), and parts of the debating articles and those on the "straitjacket of the industry" (in No. 3). But articles like Alan Lovell's on *Hiroshima mon Amour*, an over-aesthetic view of *Shadows*, and a symbol-searching investigation of *The Virgin Spring* suggest a somewhat circuitous route to commitment.

For those interested in censorship and able to read legislative reports in Italian, the April-May issue of *Bianco e Nero* will prove invaluable. Apart from a detailed account of Italian censorship policy, it includes notes on censorship as practised in some twenty countries followed by a number of personal statements concerning the situation in Italy.

The two main American journals have recently produced meaty numbers. The Summer issue of *Film Culture* carries views on editing by an international team; a detailed survey of Robert Aldrich's career; and an American view of the U.S. directors beloved by *Cahiers du Cinéma*. A symposium on the New American Cinema Group offers valuable information, along with some showy attitudinising. *Film Quarterly*, more down to earth in its approach, includes in its Summer number a detailed plan for the creation of an all-embracing American Film Institute, which sounds admirable if it can only be realised.

Also worth looking at: *Cinema 61's* parody in the form of a futuristic glance at the cinema of twenty years ahead. Reviews include a co-production by Samsonov and Donen; a stills supplement features "Jean Gabin in his latest triumph," looking exactly like a gnarled Australian aborigine.

JOHN GILLET and ROBERT VAS

INDUSTRIAL ART BURSARIES COMPETITION 1961

40 Bursaries of a total value of over £6,000 offered to young British designers between 17 and 30 years of age.

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Full particulars from the Bursaries Officer, Royal Society of Arts, John Adam Street, Adelphi, London, W.C.2. (TRAFALGAR 2366).

Closing date for Entry Forms 9th October, 1961.

DO YOU REMEMBER THE FILM SOCIETY?

A history of the Film Society and the 108 programmes presented under its auspices is in preparation. From its first programme (1925, Paul Leni's "Warning Shadows") to the last (1939, Eisenstein's "Alexander Nevski") the Film Society held an important place in the British cultural scene. Would anybody who belonged or has memories or documents please write to the editor of the history—David Robinson, 36 Golden Square, London, W.1.

OUTSTANDING FOREIGN FILMS

FROM THE SIGNIFICANT REPERTOIRE OF WORLD CINEMA

MY UNCLE (French) Color Jacques Tati

The Oscar-Winning picture which finds Mr. Hulot at war with the mechanization of modern times.

LA MATERNELLE (French, 1933) Jean Benoit-Levy

The most famous film of a day nursery in Montmartre slums has an agonizing, Zolaesque reality. The finest example of the documentary approach adapted to the fictional story. "Belongs among the great European screen dramas."—NY TIMES.

THE BLUE ANGEL (German, 1929)

A portrait of a middle-aged professor degraded through his love for a café entertainer. Now a film classic, it established director Josef von Sternberg and his protegee Marlene Dietrich. A penetrating picture of social decay.

THE EIGHTH DAY OF THE WEEK (German) Alexander Ford

Two people's search for love fulfillment. German version of the banned Polish-German film.

THE ITALIAN STRAW HAT (French, 1927)

René Clair's "brilliant comedy deep in bitter satire of French middle-class life, and realized with a high degree of intelligence and cinematic skill" (Rotha). English titles, no dialogue, with musical background added.

A MAN ESCAPED (French)

By Bresson. A masterpiece of suspense and ingenuity. "Best directed film of the year."—Cannes Festival.

THE SEVENTH SEAL (Swedish) Ingmar Bergman

"A piercing and powerful contemplation of the passage of man upon this earth."—CROWTHER, NY TIMES.

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CORRESPONDENCE

Friends of the National Film Archive

The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND

SIR,—By the time this letter appears in your Autumn issue, I hope that the inaugural meeting will have been held of a new society called "Friends of the National Film Archive", set up with the friendly concurrence of the Governors of the British Film Institute.

The main job of the National Film Archive (a division of the British Film Institute) is the selection and preservation of films both current, dormant and out of circulation. Since its foundation in 1935 it has brought together, thanks to the help of the film trade and many others, an important and representative collection of newsreels, documentaries and features. Before that date, however, there were no such official bodies, so the growth of the cinema over its first forty years is represented mainly by films preserved more or less by hazard. By chemical or mechanical deterioration as much as by wanton destruction many masterpieces of the cinema have been lost for good, and others have come down to us only in mutilated form. Even the great Hollywood studio collections are often unavailable and even deteriorating through neglect.

The problem facing the National Film Archive is not so much the selection and preservation of relatively recent films, but the preservation of the older films. This is because films made since 1951 are printed on stable acetate film and so are relatively easy to preserve. But most films made before 1951 were printed on nitrate base, both explosively inflammable and subject to chemical decay.

Inevitably the bulk of the National Film Archive's resources are devoted to preserving stocks already held, copying deteriorating nitrate film on to a stable acetate base. Little is left over for filling important gaps in the collection before 1935 by outside purchase or—what comes to the same thing—by exchange. So the collection is neither so representative as it should be nor so useful. Worse still, over the next few years many important films, not at present represented in the Archive, may rot away altogether unless steps are taken to preserve them. And there is no means at all for the humbler, much cheaper but no less essential task of acquiring material related to the history and growth of the cinema for lack of which the Archive cannot take the place it deserves alongside other great centres of culture and scholarship. For example, the Archive has only very little material illustrative of the pre-history of the cinema and no means of exhibiting what it has got, and even the

relatively small sums required for acquiring or copying scripts, posters and set designs are unavailable.

The main purposes of the Friends of the National Film Archive are two—to raise funds for amplifying the National Film Archive collections and their display; and perhaps of even greater importance, to inspire public understanding of and sympathy for the work of the National Film Archive and its potential importance not only in the fields of film, aesthetic and criticism, but also in those of history, science, geography, sociology and psychology.

The subscription to the Friends of the National Film Archive is £2 2 0 for ordinary members, and the Society has been accepted by the Inland Revenue as a charity, so allowing the recovery of income tax from subscriptions paid under a seven year covenant. Will those of your readers interested apply for particulars to the Secretary of the Friends of the National Film Archive, 81 Dean Street, London, W.1.

Yours faithfully,
ARTHUR ELTON.

10 Eldon Grove,
Hampstead,
London, N.W.3.

Maurice Tourneur

SIR,—During a visit to the United States last March I had the opportunity of seeing two films of Maurice Tourneur at Eastman House Film Archive which confirmed previous ideas of his importance as a film-maker. His death on August 4th marks the passing of one of the great pictorialists of the screen, an artist unremittingly devoted to the medium he chose above all others (at one time he was apprenticed to Rodin and Puvis de Chavannes) and boldly independent in statement and practice.

He was already a director in France before World War One, and one has only to look at *The Wishing Ring* (1914) to realise the refinement which he brought to American films. The range of his subject matter was varied, but he had a predilection for British literature and the English scene (he had been an actor with Réjane's company in London). He was the first to bring Conrad to the screen in *Victory* (1919). Other films which reflected this interest were *Prunella* (1918), *Treasure Island* (1920) and *Lorna Doone* (1922). In 1923 he came to England and shot Hall Caine's *The Christian* on location in London and the Isle of Man.

In 1918 he made an ambitious film in *Woman*, a series of incidents through the ages à la *Intolerance*, and in the same year a version of *The Doll's House* with Elsie Ferguson, one of the many stars who played in his films—Seena Owen, Pauline Starke, Shirley Mason, Anita Stewart, Barbara Bedford and Barbara La Marr. The two films he directed for Mary Pickford—*The Pride of the Clan* and *Poor Little Rich Girl*—were among her best. An ambitious *Blue Bird* in 1918 showed Tourneur's flair for pictorial experiment in its décors and movement. But whether his innovations included complex camera treatment or composite sets there was always a good-humoured approach to the delineation of people. He was in many ways an aloof man, but there is no denying the sympathy which emerges from his films.

His career in Hollywood ended with *The Last of the Mohicans* (1920), breathtaking in its scenic scope and deeply moving in its elegiac ending. From his later career in Europe may be noted *Das Schiff der verlorene Menschen* (1929) with Marlene Dietrich, *Katia* (1938) with Danielle Darrieux, *Volpone* (1940) with Baur and Juvet, and *La Main du Diable* (1942) with Fresnay. Tourneur died in Paris where he was born 85 years ago. He is survived by his son, the director Jacques Tourneur.

Yours faithfully,
LIAM O'LAOGHAIRE

1 St. Andrew's Grove,
Stoke Newington,
London, N.16.

One Eyed Jacks

SIR,—Nobody, I imagine, would disagree that *One Eyed Jacks* serves largely as a vehicle for Brando's chosen public image.

However, Miss Houston, in her otherwise highly perceptive comments on the film, only mentions in passing that Calder Willingham was one of those responsible for the screenplay. And surely this film's Freudian overtones and its heavy emphasis on

A scene from Maurice Tourneur's "Treasure Island".



sadism reflect Willingham's preoccupations as they are to be found in *Paths of Glory* (brilliantly controlled); *End as a Man* (with a tendency to the sensational); and also, let us not forget, in *The Vikings*.

Moreover, although *One Eyed Jacks* is a compelling enough film, its approach to violence seems to me to be highly immoral.

Yours faithfully,
TIMOTHY C. PULLEINE.

Westcliffe,
Oxford Road,
Dewsbury,
Yorks.

Back Numbers

SIR,—May I make an appeal through the columns of your magazine? I have tried to acquire back numbers of SIGHT AND SOUND through British and American booksellers but have had very little success. I am secretary of a film society and we are trying to build up a back file of SIGHT AND SOUND up to and including Vol. 23 No. 4. (We already have a complete file starting with Vol. 24 to date.)

Should any of your readers wish to dispose of these or of any odd numbers, would they please contact me? All letters will be answered.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT MIRO.

414 St. Marks Avenue
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New York,
U.S.A.

THE FESTIVALS: EDINBURGH

continued from page 172

the parson's wife. The parson is less worried by this infidelity than by fear that his daughter has succumbed to Juan—there's the genuine Bergman father-daughter theme!

Claude Chabrol's murder story *A Double Tour* (or *Web of Passion*, or *Leda*) will presumably be getting a commercial release here. And one hopes that Wajda's *Innocent Sorcerers* will also find a British buyer. Wajda's first feature on a strictly contemporary theme is a comedy-morality as wittily Polish as *The Devil's Eye* is soberly Swedish. Also worth importing is Fons Rademaker's *The Knife*, the story of a boy's awakening from childhood to youth, told with considerable savagery as well as tenderness.

From America, *Hollywood: The Golden Years* is a good popular survey of the silent era, well narrated by Gene Kelly and made with special assistance from Richard Griffith and William K. Everson. *The Exiles*, directed by Kent Mackenzie, is concerned with North American Indians living in Los Angeles. Very much a down-beat film, a sort of junior *On the Bowery* cum *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, it tries to show the conflict between the vestiges of old tribal customs and metropolitan life. I don't think it succeeds—there must be more to it than this. Jerome Hill's *The Sandcastle*, finally, is a pleasant idea, but long at sixty minutes. A boy, abetted by his kid sister, builds a tremendous sandcastle, while several adults stationed about the beach emerge as idiosyncratic characters. Some good moments—including the old lady who really does take her home with her, brushing the carpet on the beach—but when some nuns arrived to play baseball I was alarmed lest Ingrid Bergman and Bing Crosby had brought the harmonium. Amid the sentimentality, the dream sequence in which the castle is animated with toy theatre characters comes off well.

Edinburgh began as a festival of documentary, but the more adventurous films now go to Venice, Cork, Oberhausen and Mannheim, which are competitive. It seems that short-film makers are eager for prizes. There was not a great deal to remark on among the many government, television and sponsored pieces I saw in the first week, though Canada, Holland and Poland sent the best.

JOHN MINCHINTON

THE SWEDISH PARADOX

continued from page 194

in *Wild Strawberries*, is now dead. Dr. Dymling, whose name has been almost synonymous with the Swedish film industry for the past twenty years, is also dead. His successor at SF, the director Kenne Fant, has seven films behind him, though none of them with the qualities of a Bergman or a Sucksdorff; he is currently directing the most expensive film ever made in Sweden, *The Wonderful Adventure of Nils*. Sucksdorff is trying a territory new to him; Bergman has joined Sjöberg at the Royal Dramatic Theatre, saying he will perhaps make eight or ten more films before he is fifty, then retire to work only in the theatre. Sweden is a small country, as the Swedes keep saying, and increasingly open to the cultural and financial invasions of the world, particularly of the United States. American influences on Swedish youth are everywhere evident. The violent Westerns censored at the cinemas have slipped in via TV, which is also now severely self-censored since the recent case of a boy who, modelling himself after his American TV heroes the Cartwright Brothers, killed a school mate and injured half a dozen others with an illegally purchased gun. It is the teenagers, now the largest section of Sweden's cinema-going population, who form the greatest pressure group on taste.

What Sweden can salvage from the positive aspects of its peaceful isolation and democratic "neutrality" of the past, its relative freedom to develop its own qualities and to select what it likes from other traditions, is still to be seen. One who has glimpsed its recent "golden years" of film-making can hope that at least something of its imaginative maturity, respectful intimacy and spirit of community will remain.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Stills:
HORIZON PICTURES (G.B.)/COLUMBIA for *Lawrence of Arabia*.
UNITED ARTISTS for *A Pocketful of Miracles*, *One, Two, Three*, *Judgement at Nuremberg*, *Siren of Atlantis*.
METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER for *King of Kings*, *Madame Curie*.
WARNER BROTHERS for *Rebel Without a Cause*, *To Have and Have Not*.
PARAMOUNT PICTURES for *The Miracle of Morgan's Creek*, *The Strange Love of Martha Ivers*, *The Dividing Line*.
RANK FILM DISTRIBUTORS for *Whistle Down the Wind*, *Blind Date*, *The Gypsy and the Gentleman*.
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DEUTSCHE FILM HANSA for *Natürlich die Autofahrer*.
UFA for *Black Gravel*.
PALLAS FILM for *Gino*.
TOHO for *Yojimbo*.
ARCO/CINE DEL DUCA for *Accattone*.
PRODUCCIONES ANGEL for *Piel de Verano*.
SVENSK FILMINDUSTRI for *The Devil's Eye*.
EYELINE FILMS for *For the Love of Sheila*.
DOROTHY OSHLAG for *Lord of the Flies*.
NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE for *Treasure Island*.

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A GUIDE TO CURRENT FILMS

Films of special interest to *SIGHT AND SOUND* readers are denoted by one, two, three or four stars

ADA (M-G-M) Susan Hayward, on her second-best broomstick, as the scarlet woman who cleans up a corrupt state legislature and becomes the Governor's lady. The sumptuously improbable plot needs a more brazen touch than Daniel Mann's, but some choice passages survive triumphant. (Dean Martin, Wilfrid Hyde White. Metrocolor, CinemaScope.)

***ADOLESCENTES, LES (Gala)** New Wave subject, a schoolgirl's 24-hour affair with a mature friend of the family, with baroque accessories borrowed from Fellini and Bergman, staged meticulously by Old Guard director Alberto Lattuada. (Catherine Spaak, Christian Marquand, Jean Sorel.)

***BEN-HUR (M-G-M)** Out of five years' preparation, 6½ months' shooting at Cinecittà, 40,000 tons of sand and a sea of blood and Camera 65 celluloid, director William Wyler has fished a memorable 9-minute chariot race, some Victorian scripture-book frescoes and an unexpectedly forceful Messala from Stephen Boyd. (Charlton Heston, Jack Hawkins, Hugh Griffith, Haya Harareet. Technicolor, Panavision.)

***BLACK TIGHTS (BLC/British Lion)** Four of Roland Petit's best-known ballets—*La Croqueuse de diamants*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Deuil en 24 heures*, *Carmen*—done up in a glossy Technirama-Technicolor package and introduced by Maurice Chevalier. (Moiré Shearer, Cyd Charisse, Zizi Jeanmaire, Roland Petit; director, Terence Young.)

COME SEPTEMBER (Rank) War between the generations, the sexes, and between yet another rich American country club type and those volatile, sophisticated Italians. Lacklustre comedy, though Gina Lollobrigida does her best to strike a few sparks. (Rock Hudson, Walter Slezak, Sandra Dee; director, Robert Mulligan. Technicolor, Panavision.)

DAMNED AND THE DARING, THE (Compton) Trigger-happy trio hole up in a rural reformatory-without-bars, with lurid and embarrassing results. (Jean-Marc Bory, Jean Babilée, Pierre Mondy; director, Hervé Bromberger.)

***EXODUS (United Artists)** Triple-decker history of the foundation of Israel, adapted from Leon Uris's cantankerous best-seller. History thinly sliced for the box-office, with a good word for everyone; even for Preminger admirers, it's a long, hard slog to the finish. (Paul Newman, Eva Marie Saint, Ralph Richardson, Sal Mineo. Technicolor, Super-Panavision 70.)

***FANNY (Warner-Pathé)** Triple-decker history of the romantic tribulations of Fanny the fishmonger's daughter, adapted from Pagnol's 30-year-old Marseilles trilogy. Neither the comedy nor the casting bears up to comparison, but photographer Jack Cardiff has been given his head where the locations and the love scenes are concerned. (Leslie Caron, Horst Buchholz, Maurice Chevalier, Charles Boyer; director, Joshua Logan. Technicolor.)

FRANCIS OF ASSISI (Fox) Action- and passion-starved slab of hagiolatory, with Bradford Dillman, Stuart Whitman and Dolores Hart locked in an eternal triangle that smacks more of the campus than the call of God. (Director, Michael Curtiz. DeLuxe Color, CinemaScope.)

FRIGHTENED CITY, THE (Anglo Amalgamated) Chicago-style thuggery in London; presented with some relish, a gruesome attention to detail and all the familiar underworld trimmings. (Herbert Lom, John Gregson, Sean Connery; director, John Lemont.)

***GUNS OF NAVARONE, THE (Columbia)** Adventures of a British sabotage team on a Greek island. The introduction sets the scene for an epic: what follows is just an action picture, and although Carl Foreman's script has points to make about men in war, they're never very explicit. (Gregory Peck, David Niven, Anthony Quinn, Anthony Quayle; director, J. Lee Thompson. Technicolor, CinemaScope.)

HONEYMOON MACHINE, THE (M-G-M) CinemaScope and Metrocolor comedy about three American naval officers who try to break the Venice Lido's casino with an electric computer. Handsome to look at, but weighted down with plot asides and a multiplicity of styles. (Steve McQueen, Jim Hutton, Paula Prentiss; director, Richard Thorpe.)

***INVASION QUARTET (M-G-M)** Spike Milligan imposes his own eccentric humour on the more conventional comedy take-off of the *Navarone* type of wartime heroics. Script and direction lack a confident style, but the result, surprisingly, is often engagingly funny. (Bill Travers, Gregoire Aslan, John Le Mesurier; director, Jay Lewis.)

MARINES, LET'S GO! (Fox) Raoul Walsh's hymn of praise to the leather-necks—here a platoon of instantly recognisable types involved in a series of noisily emotional exploits. (Tom Tryon, David Hedison. DeLuxe Color, CinemaScope.)

MASTER OF THE WORLD (Anglo Amalgamated) Strip cartoon fantasy, from a couple of Jules Verne novels, about a 19th-century flying ship and its militantly pacifist master. A disarmingly anachronistic air view of London, presumably shot before the Great Fire; some lively vulgarity. (Vincent Price, Charles Bronson, Henry Hull; director, William Witney. Technicolor.)

MATTER OF WHO, A (M-G-M) Bowler-hatted British health officer and American oil-man prevent smallpox epidemic. Unlucky foray into Hitchcock's comedy-thriller territory, confusingly written and directed like a chain of half-hour TV films. (Terry-Thomas, Alex Nicol, Sonja Ziemann; director, Don Chaffey.)

MISTY (Fox) Picturesque foal-taming in the Virginia coastal islands. David Ladd rides gamely to a down-beat finish, but too loose a rein on dialogue and story adds furlongs to the course. (Arthur O'Connell; director, James B. Clark. DeLuxe Color, CinemaScope.)

MURDER SHE SAID (M-G-M) Margaret Rutherford's redoubtable Miss Marple distinguishes an otherwise tame Agatha Christie adaptation. (Arthur Kennedy, Muriel Pavlow, James Robertson Justice; director, George Pollock.)

NAKED EDGE, THE (United Artists) Deborah Kerr as a rich business man's wife agitated by fears that her husband (Gary Cooper) is a murderer: extravagantly unlikely thriller set in London, let down by a laboured script and shamelessly derivative (Hitchcock, Buñuel, Wajda, Murnau, etc., etc.) direction. (Eric Portman, Michael Wilding, Hermione Gingold; director, Michael Anderson.)

***PARENT TRAP, THE (Disney)** Hayley Mills as 13-year-old twins, separated since birth, who connive to reconcile their divorced parents. Too long, but cunningly entertaining all the same. (Maureen O'Hara, Brian Keith, Leo G. Carroll; director, David Swift. Technicolor.)

***PLAYING AT LOVE (Contemporary)** Philippe de Broca's first film, an infectious, witty, violently spontaneous situation comedy about a young girl, living with an irrepressible painter, who longs for a child to cement their affair. (Jean-Pierre Cassel, Geneviève Cluny.) *Reviewed.*

PLEASURE OF HIS COMPANY, THE (Paramount) Fred Astaire as an ageing playboy bent on disrupting his San Franciscan daughter's wedding. Resilient playing from Lilli Palmer; otherwise the comedy jogs through the usual jokes about simple America confronted with international set suavity. (Debbie Reynolds, Tab Hunter; director, George Seaton. Technicolor.)

RAISING THE WIND (Anglo Amalgamated) British farce about a music academy. Sometimes sharp, more often flat. (James Robertson Justice, Leslie Phillips, Paul Massie, Kenneth Williams; director, Gerald Thomas.)

******REGLE DU JEU, LA (Contemporary)** Renoir's tragi-farce centring on a week-end party at a country chateau makes a surgical study of a debased element in immediately pre-war French society. An unabridged version of what is still one of the most remarkable French films ever made. (Dalio, Carette, Nora Gregor, Jean Renoir.)

*****ROCCO AND HIS BROTHERS (Regal International)** Visconti's controversial family saga of migrant Southerners in Milan. Savage in its preoccupation with corruption and sexual violence; specious as social and personal tragedy; remarkable in the quality of Annie Girardot's performance, and in the power and sweep of its visual style. (Renato Salvatori, Alain Delon, Katina Paxinou.)

SEARCH FOR PARADISE (Cinerama) Still in the fairground stage, this tour of Ceylon (local shrines), Hunza (polo and the Happy Land of Hunza lullaby), Kashmir (river boats), Nepal and Katmandu (coronation of King Mahendra) ends in a display of American air power. Lowell Thomas's commentary and Dimitri Tiomkin's 110-piece orchestra maintain a determined assault on nerves and ear-drums. (Director, Otto Lang. Technicolor, Cinerama.)

*****SHADOW OF ADULTERY (Gala)** Alexandre Astruc's most mature film to date, a sleek, sophisticated vehicle for Annie Girardot as a married woman hungering for independence. Telling, if occasionally ambiguous, notations on love, sensuality, marital and extra-marital relations. (Christian Marquand, Daniel Gélin.) *Reviewed.*

SOUTH PACIFIC (Fox) High, wide and generally unhandsome version of the stage musical, stodgily directed by Joshua Logan. Happily the songs survive a welter of eccentric colour effects and jungle décor. (Rossano Brazzi, Mitzi Gaynor, John Kerr. Technicolor, Todd-AO.)

SPINSTER (M-G-M) Freak casting of Shirley MacLaine as an inhibited but progressive schoolteacher, repelling extravagant advances from Laurence Harvey. Off-beat setting, in a backwoods New Zealand school, with Maori chief-tain down the road, and dialogue which the actors somehow manage to keep a straight face about. (Jack Hawkins; director, Charles Walters. Metrocolor, CinemaScope.)

TAMMY TELL ME TRUE (Rank) Unschooled shanty-boat girl, all alone in the world except for a pet nanny-goat, sets off downstream to learn to talk proper. Syrupy confection for the popcorn trade. (Sandra Dee, John Gavin; director, Harry Keller. Eastman Colour.)

*****TASTE OF HONEY, A (BLC/British Lion/Bryanston)** Heartening film of Shelagh Delaney's play, beautifully acted by Rita Tushingham, Dora Bryan and Murray Melvin. The rhythm and poetry are uncertain, the exteriors often mannered; but the warmth and intimacy of the dialogue scenes reveal Tony Richardson's direction at its most sympathetic. (Robert Stephens, Paul Danquah.) *Reviewed.*

***TWO WOMEN (Gala)** Hope and despair, lust and mother love, life and death in the chaos of World War II Italy: De Sica's location shooting and Sophia Loren's valiant performance fail to prevent an impression of almost complete artificiality. (Eleanora Brown, Jean-Paul Belmondo, Raf Vallone.)

***VICTIM (Rank)** A sober attempt to come to grips with the subject of homosexuality within the format of a blackmail mystery thriller; a somewhat facile though well-intentioned script is given a lift by the discreet anguish behind much of the playing (notably Dirk Bogarde and Peter McEnery) and by the openly concerned direction. (Sylvia Syms, Dennis Price; director, Basil Dearden.) *Reviewed.*

WASTREL, THE (Archway) Shipwrecked in mid-ocean, a father and son relive their pasts in a series of water-logged flashbacks, uneasily acted in English. (Van Heflin, Ellie Lambetti, Michael Stellman; director, Michael Cacoyannis.)

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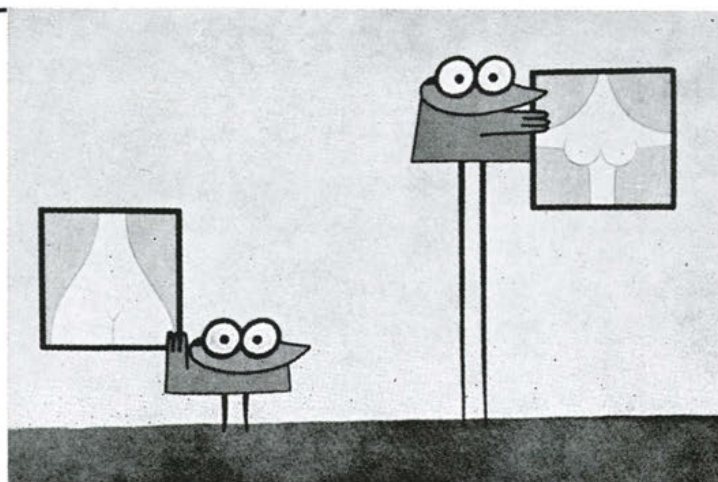
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